



PHD

**Escape and "struggle": routes of women's liberation in Bihar**

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**"ESCAPE" AND "STRUGGLE":  
ROUTES TO WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN BIHAR**

Submitted by Indu B Sinha  
For the degree of Ph.D.  
of the University of Bath  
2002

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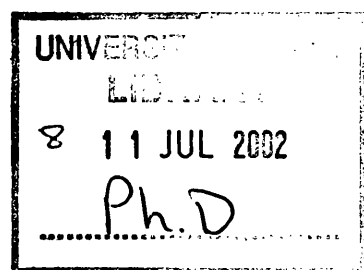
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## ABSTRACT

The new technology instilled new 'forces of production' into an agrarian setting, which was yet to undergo substantial institutional change that could have subsequently led to change the 'relations of production' as well. This setting was the countryside of the state of Bihar. While, the first process went apace since 1970s, the second remained vitiated. This led to serious conflicts between the twin processes of the 'forces of production' and the 'relations of production'. This conflict has remained one of the root causes of ongoing socio-economic conflicts expressed in militant social movements in Bihar. In the north, the anti-feudal radical mobilisation (contemporary to the technological intrusion) by the poor threatened the feudal forces and the state machinery to the extent to take up partial implementation of the land-reform laws, yet it could not sustain so strong as to significantly dislodge the feudal system and radically alter the production relations. The poor gained very little in return and in absence of a sustained struggle for getting more they were left with no option but to 'escape' from their roots for a livelihood. To them, out migration to distant labour markets emerged as the rescue point. In central Bihar, the feudal stronghold was structurally weaker. The mobilisation continued to target the weaker feudal order. The poor gained substantially and not in economic terms alone. Here, 'struggle' offered an option to survive with dignity. Amidst this conflicting interaction between the modern productive forces and the traditional production relations, there emerged two dominant actors - 'market' and 'mobilisation' in north and central Bihar regions, respectively. And, this conflicting interaction offered two distinct avenues for survival for the poor - 'escape' and 'struggle'. Women directly and / or indirectly experienced and shared this whole conflicting situation in both the regions.

This study is about how powerful have these dominant 'actors', i.e. market and mobilisation acted in creating 'space' for women in north and central Bihar, respectively over last three decades. The enquiry is about how far have these twin catalysts succeeded in relaxing patriarchal constraints and in bringing about changes in traditional relationships between the genders. The exploration is about how and in what forms these changes lead towards women liberation. Women liberation is the keyhole, the focus, the viewfinder - the central theme of the thesis; Market and Mobilisation are the twin catalysts, the agents for gender-relational change. Gender relation is the framework. Structural change is the setting. North and central regions of Bihar are the sites for this research. It is encouraging that the study, in the end, speaks much more than what is assumed at the beginning.

The study of market forces, as a powerful catalyst for change in gender relations, leads to argue for a feminine route to liberation in north Bihar. The emergence of a 'feminine sector of production' provides the material basis for this argument. In central Bihar, the study of mobilization, as the other catalyst, leads to argue for a 'feminisation of the strategy' of mobilisation itself. In north Bihar, 'escape' by male migrants has allowed their women to act more assertively and decisively. Though left alone and often vulnerable, this opportunity allows them discover their own strength in the process of coping with a difficult situation. This process is painful yet liberating. This is 'escape' route to women's liberation. In central Bihar, poor women (and men) resort to struggle against class and gender oppression. This struggle keeps poor women's lives on the verge of perpetual hardships of all kinds and also exposes rich women to different kind of challenges. Poor women have nothing to lose but their chains! This is 'struggle' route to women's liberation.

The twin catalysts of market and mobilisation are examined as the accelerators to the processes that create material conditions for women to emerge as stronger (than before) actors. The market-infused development has given way to a feminine regime of production (in food sector) vis-à-vis a masculine one (in cash sector) in north Bihar. This phenomenon provides strong basis for arguing in favour of feminisation of productive regime in food sector. In central Bihar, mobilisation has given passage to a fair degree of gender-relational changes and liberating opportunities for women thereby over last decades. This is most visible in growth of gender consciousness that not only has emerged out of the womb of class-consciousness but has also made its presence felt in the processes of shaping of the strategies and fixing up of the priorities for mobilisation. This is reflected in growing concern of the radical mobilisation with the issue of development. This indicates a shift in the strategy of the radical left politics for change, because the radical mobilisation basing on the Marxist ideology believes in overthrowing of the state power and aims at reconstituting of the society according to a radical set of principles. The particular engagement of the radical women's organisations (WOs) with the question of development and mobilisation of poor women (and men) against 'detrimental' of development, i.e. the 'Bureaucratic feudalism' may be explained as an indication towards a feminisation of the process of mobilisation itself.

This study argues for an alternative feminine vision for development, which assigns central place to reproduction. This argues for a reversal of the development paradigm that assigns central place to production. This vision for development would encourage and strengthen

the feminine productive regime in north Bihar. The present situation in central Bihar too is ripe for arguing in favour of strong mobilisation aimed at development in a region where movement, strategically, had no truce with development before. An alternative feminine vision can transform mobilisation into the 'input' for development.

This alternative 'feminine vision' offers powerful insights for developing a distinct feminist perspective, which I term as the "Women's Worldview" (WWV). The reflections of this feminine vision may be found in the 'feminine regime of production' in north Bihar and in the process of 'feminising of mobilisation strategy' in central Bihar. An expanded feminine vision emerging from the ground would provide conceptual basis for building up this fresh holistic, humanistic and inclusive feminist perspective. This perspective (WWV) may lead towards a 'feminine route' to human liberation. This study finally provides evidence to the main argument that women liberation has strong potential to culminate into an alternative process to human liberation.

***To My Daughter Krishula,  
As Her Maiden Look Into My Eyes  
Conveyed To Me That Sky Was The Limit For My Strength!***

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Ms. Sally Jones, the Software Manager, IFIPA, in conjunction with Anand, a Software Engineer (also my brother) managed to get the whole thesis through Internet and solved the conversion problem, thereby protecting the thesis from technical hazards! My thanks

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## **NOTES, APPENDICES, GLOSSARY, ACRONYMS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

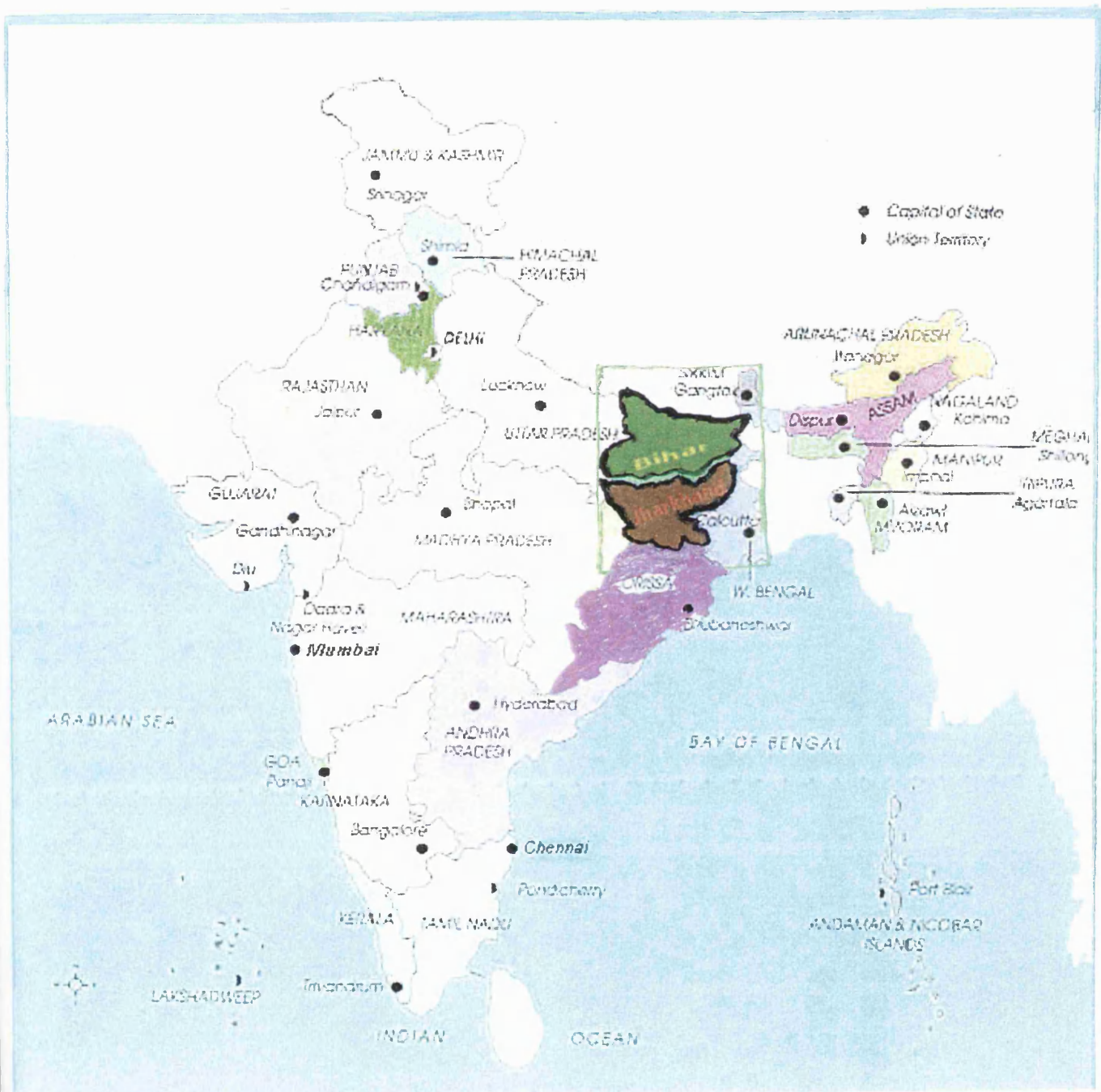
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Map 1: Bihar On The Map Of India

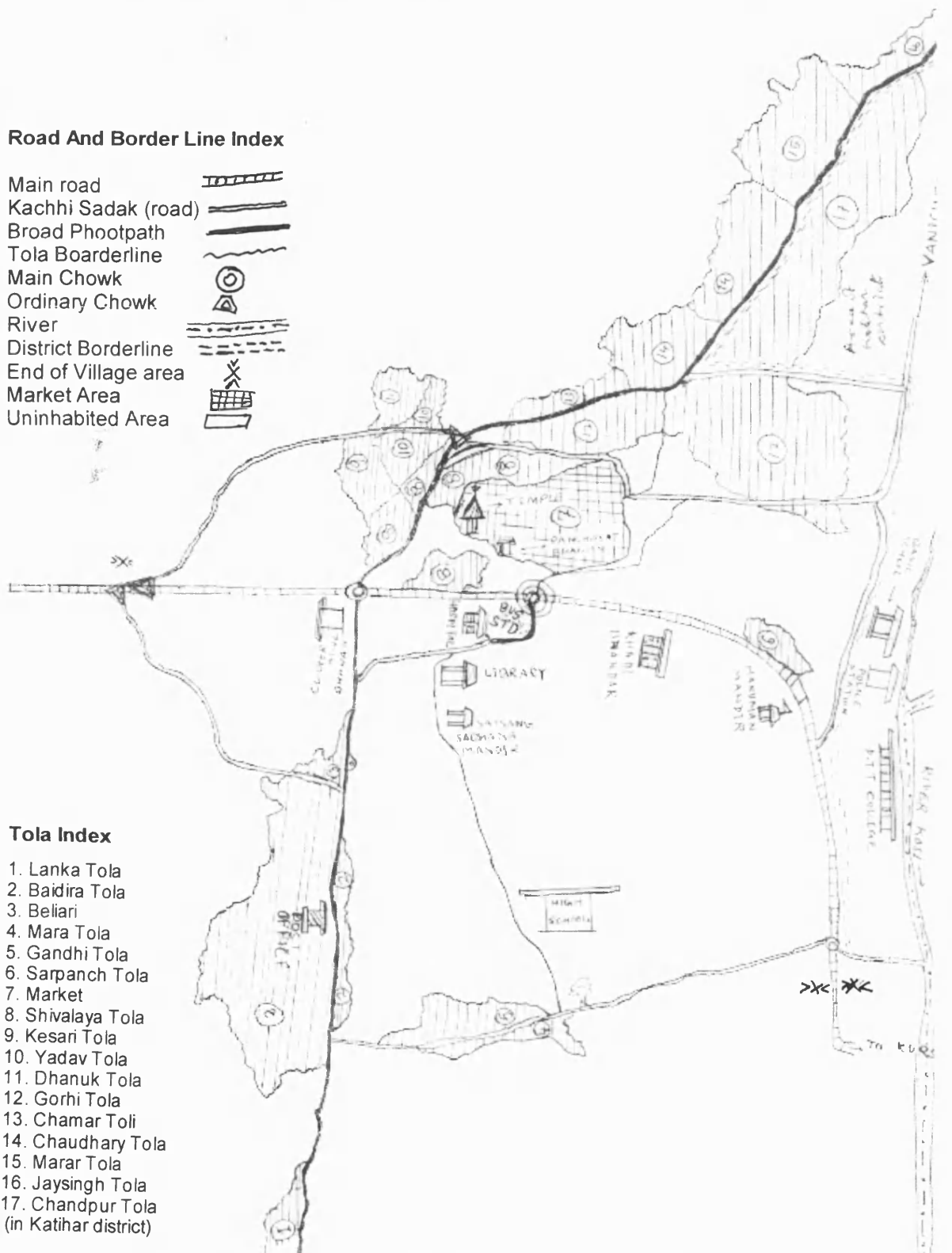


Map 2: Research Sites— Purnea And Jahanabad Districts In Bihar



### MAP 3: Research Site Purnea

#### Tikapatti Village With Human Settlements And Road Ways



By Chandra Kishore Mandal

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BREAKING THE SILENCE**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

It was like stepping into the vacuum when I initiated. The whole social science research environment in Bihar, at best treated women questions as an appended part to the whole gender -neutral research exercise. Even at the apex research institution in Bihar, A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, women questions began to be addressed as appended to the whole. The data -enslaved economic research practice, of which I was also a part for a few years at the ANSISS, treated it as unconventional to talk about gender. Even the connotation 'gender' was not known then in early 1990s. When I used to argue - why not labour problem be explored and studied from a female labour viewpoint? The counter-argument happened to be - labour problem has no gender; knowledge has no gender; economic research is gender neutral! I would further argue - female labour may have different viewpoint over labour problems as they have to face different kind of problems while labouring in the field; knowledge is gendered as apart from what women conventionally do (child bearing, mothering, nurturing, cooking, home-management etc.) many traditional things, such as a particular language, traditional treatments of many ailments, traditional methods of health care and many other things that women know is often not known to men. My grandmothers, for instance, knew many such things, which were not known to my grandfathers. My mother, instead is 'educated' and her stock of traditional knowledge is very limited (compared to my grandmothers). I have seen my maternal grandmother virtually ruling over my maternal grandfather, whose primary concern was to earn money for the family and hand it in to my grandmother, who would quite judiciously spend it over the whole family with a wonderful sense of house-management. They never interfered one another's spheres of work and responsibilities. My grandfather survived for many years (after my grandmother died) as very lonely, miserable and helpless person even though he was getting enough money every month as pension after retirement from job! I knew knowledge was gendered and often felt agitated over the whole masculinist economic research environment at the ANSISS.

Another thing that would often disturb me was 'data-enslavement' and production of

skeleton research findings under the garb of 'objectivity'. That the economic research cannot exclude 'qualitative' factors and like other social science disciplines cannot afford to ignore 'relativity' - often generated hot debates with my colleagues at the ANSISS.

It was precisely this masculinist and reductionist atmosphere of economic research against which sprang up my voice of protest. It was then obvious that when I got this opportunity to research gender in an agrarian structural setting, I took up this challenge to step into the vacuum and to break the silence on this issue. Obviously, the proposed study became a pioneer one in Bihar.

### **1.1 Bihar: The Land of Activism**

While gender oriented research environment, for which I prefer to use a specific phrase 'a movement for change from above' (Chapter - 4), in Bihar was discouraging, the arena of activism, i.e. 'the movement for change from the grassroots' remained vibrant. Not only the radical left ideology underpinning rich and versatile mobilisation experience vibrated the north-west and the central regions of the state, but the radical feminist movement of the early seventies also spirited a tiny section of the urban middle class youths. The socialist and the radical left movements essentially incorporated 'feminist' issues into their agenda for struggle. It may appear unsound to use the term 'feminist' to express their concern for women's problem. But it never required special efforts to explain to anyone acquainted with the flaming fields of Bihar that the 'feminists' were those who (irrespective of their gender) fought against any kind of social discrimination and oppression directed against women. That "a Naxalite<sup>1</sup> was one who fought women's oppression from the last drop of his blood!" These movements directed against an unfair, discriminatory social order could hardly ignore gender discrimination. It was impossible to escape this social responsibility. Bihar adapted the term 'feminist'; developed its own ways and means to define it; and felt as comfortable with its own models of feminism as with its own shades of social activism.

Bihar is a land of practice rather than studies in this context. This land offers versatile site for exploring mobilisation as a powerful catalyst for change. It was tempting indeed to explore mobilisation as a catalyst for change in gender relations and as a route to women liberation.

## 1.2 About Myself

I have worked for about three years (mid-1988 to early 1991) at the A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna in various capacities as Research Officer, Research Associate and Project In-charge. I was near completing a research project about agricultural labour problems in central, north and south - all the three regions of undivided<sup>2</sup> Bihar - sponsored by the National Commission for Rural Labour (NCRL) by the time I got this sponsorship. Yet before, I began as a professional journalist with the Times of India group of publications in 1986. I later realised that it was a wrong decision because it offered rare scope for going deeper into grassroots realities and little opportunity for free expression. Therefore, I switched over to social science research (at the ANSISS) but continued writing as a 'freelance' columnist for more than one local and national news dailies and weeklies. The Economic and Political Weekly assigned to me a regular column for writing about political and social developments in Bihar in 1987.

Association with the socialist and radical left organisations, women's organisations and some NGOs working in Bihar has remained a part of my journalistic assignments. This continued as a part of my research activities at the ANSISS as well. I began writing a weekly column in 1987, namely - Aaadhi Aabadi - this means "the one half" (of the populace). This column addressed problems and issues concerning women. Through this column I treated women in my writing as the 'first half' (of the populace) in contrast to the 'other half', the usual connotation used for women in popular media. This column continued to be published simultaneously in two local news dailies till 1991. I resumed this column again in 1995 and continue to write till date.

While my journalistic and research experience about north Bihar was very little, I extensively researched central Bihar in course of meeting journalistic assignments and later, in meeting research commitments at the ANSISS. Yet before, I surveyed and investigated this region many times with groups of activists and wrote extensively on various aspects of the radical movement. Most of these reports are published in the Economic and Political Weekly, the Statesman daily and in vernacular press. My frequent involvement in such activities continued till 1991.

This diversified pool of experience as applied researcher at the ANSISS, as a working journalist as well as a freelance columnist and close interaction with grassroots radical mobilisation has played significant role in making and shaping of this thesis.

### 1.3 The Backdrop

Nothing appears to be as ridiculed in Bihar as the scenario of realisation of the concept of 'development' on the ground. The situation worsened through 1990s. After division of the state into two unequal regions in 2000, 'development' is again a loud slogan. But, situation was not so bleak during early seventies when the new technology was adopted against the backdrop of land redistribution, mainly in favour of rich and middle peasants, with a view to stir up wheels of development in the countryside of Bihar. This acted as a powerful catalyst in bringing about change in traditional agrarian structure, which became less hierarchical<sup>3</sup> (than before) but more sharpened with class edge. The new technology brought with it different forms of factor markets and thus capitalist form of transaction penetrated the rural society. The penetration of the markets gave blow to traditional gender relations.

The dominant change that occurred in this overall process of development between early 1970s to late 1990s could be witnessed in terms of remarkable change in power relations between privileged and unprivileged groups and between the genders in rural society. The new power relationships began to be expressed in terms of social networking and resource-profile maintenance for transactions and markets through different social, cultural, economic and political means and sharing of all these by women across all the classes in north Bihar region. In central Bihar, this was expressed in terms of direct conflicts between privileged and unprivileged groups of rural society. Women across all classes directly or indirectly experienced and shared this whole conflicting situation.

These processes fostered a further process of change in relationships between the genders. This opened up some liberating opportunities for women in north Bihar, where markets have acted as the dominant catalyst in helping them get some leverage from gender constraints. In central Bihar, however, mobilisation has acted as the dominant catalyst in creating liberating conditions for women and bringing about changes in relationships between the genders thereby. This study is precisely about how these catalysts have fostered the process of change in traditional relationships between the genders, which allows women carve out more liberated space for them than they had before.



## **2. THE MAIN ARGUMENTS**

Liberation in its specific gendered sense has varied meaning, forms, processes and dimensions. Here, I argue that women liberation has powerful potential to emerge as an alternative process to human liberation. It is further argued that development is one route to this process and movement is another; that market is one catalyst to accelerate this process and mobilisation is another. This study seeks to explore a feminine route to human liberation.

Thus women liberation is the keyhole, the focus, the viewfinder - the central theme of the thesis; Market and Mobilisation are the twin catalysts, the agents for gender-relational change; gender relation is the framework; structural change - the setting, and north and central regions of the state of Bihar are the sites for this whole research exercise.

By Market I mean, modern forms of capitalist transactions. Markets are approached here from a functional viewpoint. It is assumed that markets function in specific institutional setups and their mutual interaction can transform agrarian relations.

Mobilisation is viewed as a process, consciously and strategically organised and transformed into movement. Although I argue (in Chapter - 4) that mobilisation can be spontaneous and spontaneity element is always present in mobilisation process. Nevertheless, strategic orientation of spontaneity is an essential condition for transformation of the process of mobilisation into a sustained movement.

How to evaluate liberation? Recognition, visibility, and assertiveness are treated as 'key criteria' and 'qualitative indicators' for evaluating the liberating status of women. These qualitative indicators make easier the complicated exercise of comprehending the complex interaction between gender behaviour and market forces in north Bihar and gender behaviour and mobilisation in central Bihar. These criteria help in tracing the evolving forms and nature of women liberation in these interactive processes.

## **3. ARGUMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF DEBATES IN INDIA AND GLOBAL**

The conceptual framework of this study involves women liberation as the central theme, development and movement as two routes to approach women liberation, market and



mobilisation, as two vehicles or agents of development and movement respectively, which act as twin catalysts for change in relationships between the genders. The arguments put forth and the conceptual framework offered in this study considerably deviate from ongoing debates on women liberation, mainstream development, impacts of markets on poor women and active participation of women in grassroots struggles for change in Indian as well as in global context. I present a comprehensive survey of literature in chapter four around the proposed scheme of this study. Here, I attempt to trace, through approachable<sup>4</sup> debates on involved topics, the relevance of the arguments in Indian and in global contexts.

Development is a global phenomenon. Movement, if it implies social protest movement, is also a global phenomenon. While studies about the impact of markets on poor women in developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have proliferated, studies about various kinds of social protest movements are rare. The research findings speaking either in favour of markets or against its devastating impacts usually appear to ignore the fact that social realities have complex nature, therefore, impacts of markets too may have complex and multifarious on women of different groups and classes in a given society. This could be demonstrated vigorously in the context of the complexities that characterises Indian societies.

### **3.1 Women Liberation**

" In 1970 the movement was called 'Women's Liberation' or contemptuously, 'Women's Lib'. When the name 'Libbers' was dropped for 'Feminists' we were relieved. What none of us noticed was that the ideal of liberation was fading out with the word. We were settling for equality." (Greer, 2000:2).

Greer argues that it is virtually impossible to separate the idea of equality from the idea of similarity. Liberation struggles are not about assimilation but about asserting difference, endowing that difference with dignity and prestige, and insisting on it as a condition for self-definition and self-determination (Greer, *ibid*: 2).

Equality is cruel to women because it requires them to duplicate behaviours that they find profoundly alien and disturbing. Men like the masculine world that they have built for themselves. In constructing its male elite, masculinist society contrives to be cruel to most men, all women and all children (Greer, *ibid*: 398). Equality, therefore, has been identified

as the 'masculine route' to women liberation in the West itself and it is now decried by Greer, Angier, and many others. When I started, masculine vis-à-vis feminine (as gender constructs) debate did not exist in India. The equality agenda was, then, facing serious challenge posed by the critiques of 'patriarchal' mode of development (Mies, 1986; Shiva, 1989). The recovery of the 'feminine principle' (Shiva, *ibid*) appears to have provided theoretical underpinnings for generating debate along the masculine / feminine lines and for asserting differences between the genders.

Femininity is not a limiting value but an expanding one and therefore, the struggle for femininity is a struggle for a certain basic principles of perceiving life, a philosophy of being, and a philosophy that can serve not just women but all humans. This thesis is all about exploring and developing such a vision for women liberation. This humble quest for a feminine route to women (and thereby human) liberation, therefore, is relevant in Indian as well as global context.

### **3.2 Development**

The voice of protest against 'patriarchal' model of development began to emerge since mid-eighties from the West (Mies, 1986). By late eighties 'feminine principle' has been rediscovered in India (Shiva, 1989). And, through the nineties alternative perspectives on development oriented towards delivering women a better share have been explored and proposed (Bhatta, 1992; Shiva and Mies, 1993; Agarwal, 1996; Jain, 1996; Dreze and Sen, 1996, Dietrich, 1996) in India. Empowerment (of women) has emerged as the most acclaimed slogan for development in the third world.

While literature about how market economy can prove to be distrustful for the poor and women proliferated since early 1990s, in India as well as abroad, there hardly exist studies about how market has affected gender-relations across all classes. Studies about how market liberates women from gender constraints at many occasions and how gender constrains market at many places are hardly known.

Krishnaraj (1998) posits that feminism and market are not congenial bedfellows. Germaine Greer's (2000:9) statement is revealing in this context. She argues that so-called 'free' economies are not kind to women who find they must sell whatever they have that is marketable in order to pay market rates for food and housing. 'User pays' is a fine

principle, but not if you are ill or disabled or a child or responsible for a child.

Greer (2000:9) further states that the implosion of the Soviet regimes and the ensuing collapse of state capitalism caused great suffering to poor women, whose lives have been spent in hard labour state-owned industries. They lost their free health care and state-subsidised housing. The collapse of communism in eastern Europe caused great suffering to poor women. These states had passed labour laws and legalised abortion, promoted women's education and employment, and created public institutions to perform some of women's domestic work. These gains are under attack in the wake of liberalisation. In China, many protections and benefits for women have been dismantled, and private enterprises refuse to bear the costs of maternity leaves (Basu, 1999:5).

The recent findings of the government agencies in India inform that liberalisation has not bore much fruits for the middle class either. It has been argued much before in 1991 that women, even in the upper strata, could not benefit from 'redistributive' aspect of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) in the same measure as men from the same strata could. Due to casualisation and informalisation of employment real wages go down and wage differentials go up; low paid, low skilled jobs get categorised for women (Harton, Kanbur and Majumdar, 1991).

### **3.3 State, Market and Empowerment in India**

India had begun a process of 'adjustment' quietly since early 1980s. The reforms introduced by the end of 1991 could be viewed not as a beginning, but the inevitable consolidation of liberalisation policy, which concentrated on removing 'license raj' and the 'ever-proliferating bureaucracy' (Dreze and Sen, 1996). Three main responses to the APP (Adjustment Policy Programme) were then observed:

- The champions, who saw it as a change long overdue and viewed market forces as essential to bring about efficiency in resource allocation (Rangarajan, 1992; Dhar, 1992);
- The opponents, who saw the adherence of these policies as abject surrender to the IMF and a loss of India's economic sovereignty (Kumar, 1991; Bhattacharya, 1991; Bidwai, 1991); and

- The moderates, who recognised the need for economic reforms but raised questions about the way these have been initiated (Vyas, 1993; Bajpai, 1993).

The moderates stressed the need for the 'safety net' and remained vigilant over the government's approach to and intent towards following an effective safety net<sup>5</sup>. A small group from among the opponents is also working on formulating an alternative<sup>6</sup> policy package.

Dreze and Sen (1996) argue that the championing and dismissal - both cannot really be judged adequately without placing them in a much broader context and there is a need to see beyond liberalisation. They state:

".... the cage that keeps the Indian economy well tamed is not only that of bureaucracy and governmental over activity, but also that of illiteracy, undernourishment, ill health and social inequalities, and their causal antecedents: governmental neglect and public apathy (Dreze and Sen, 1996: 180)".

They further argue that while removal of barriers<sup>7</sup> to using market can significantly enhance social opportunities, their practical usability requires a sharing of certain basic human capabilities<sup>8</sup>. Dietrich (1996) uses the symbols<sup>9</sup> of 'flood' and 'raft' for 'globalisation' process and 'safety net' respectively, that is offered to women as shock absorber during transition period.

It is the household that acts as a buffer (Ranadive, 1994) during transition and obviously, it is women who bear the brunt of the impact. The evidence from numerous studies (UNICEF, 1987; Sen and Grown, 1985; Shobhan, 1993; Singer et al, 1991 etc.) about other developing countries subscribes to this fact. Even the UNICEF, much before in 1987, put forward the proposal of 'adjustment with a human face'.

The National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000 AD), the document that advocates the "official gender perspective" in India, recognises that poverty is a consequence as well as cause for limiting women's life conditions; that the agricultural modernisation has resulted in deteriorating of the status of rural women and adoption of new farming technology has downgraded their input (Haxar, 1988). However, the basic official flaws such as land concentration, non-implementation of land reforms and introducing of the new technology against this institutional setting have neither been mentioned nor been recognised as the basic factors, which have resulted in creation of

millions of landless labourer families, the substantial percentage of which are female headed. The solution that it offers is, the poverty alleviation goals<sup>10</sup> to be met by 2000 AD. In addition to this, the Plan aims at women's development in agriculture and allied fields. The situation in 2002 needs no evidence to prove that how miserably these poverty alleviation goals have failed!

The Eight Plan states that people's initiative and participation must become the key element<sup>11</sup> in the whole process of development. The agriculture ministry has formed an expert group to advise on 'gender' for the Ninth Plan. These are good efforts, but bypass the model of development. To translate these noble words into practice, Krishnaraj (1998) suggests an alteration of the whole production-distribution pattern towards more decentralised modes as well as computation of a GDR (gross destruction of resources) as a measure for destruction through development, along with the GDP, as a measure of growth.

The NPPW (1988-2000 AD) recommends 'empowerment' via training as an important means to solve the basic economic problems. It recommends a woman focused human resource development strategy incorporating three levels of training: (i) grassroots level (ii) middle level (iii) policy and planning level. The components are: (i) organisational and extension training (ii) skill training (iii) management and entrepreneurial (iv) sensitisation of administrators to women development issues (v) training of the trainers. There is no awareness that even if all the schemes are effectively implemented and training perfectly imparted unless the macro economic policies are changed (Ghosh, 1995) there will be thousands of women every year left unemployed. Training, Jain argues (1995) is not only inappropriate but an obnoxious intrusion into the personal capabilities of poor women to handle gender relations including other spheres of life.

Mathew (1997) argues that the question of empowerment often gets stuck to three areas: (a) credit (b) skill upgradation (c) sensitisation - all these, in fact, are thrust of western feminism, which fails to grapple with the complex reality of development process in India. He suggests two routes<sup>12</sup> to empowerment: (a) entrepreneurship route, and (b) administered route.

The present macro economic strategy has serious implications for domestic distribution as well as for the position of women (Ghosh, 1994). This could be visualised in terms of access to basic needs, to education and skill formation, and to the provisioning of

common property resources etc.. Each of these is negatively affected by a reduction<sup>13</sup> in government expenditure and by withdrawal of the state from provisioning of goods and services and greater reliance over the market. Housework is becoming more time consuming and arduous in face of increasingly privatized common property resources and carries financial costs because of the ways commercialisation operate. The 'feminisation of work' consequent upon liberalising policies is often associated with exploitative work conditions and increased burden of women's work inside and outside family. The SAP essentially involves a shift in income distribution away from wages, enforcing women enter the labour market for sheer necessity of economic survival of the family. The recent experience of the east European countries shows how quickly those institutions and facilities, which allowed women into the labour market with some ease and equality gets eroded in face of dominance of the market processes.

Ghosh (1994) suggests that the macro-economic policy issues and strategies, therefore, need to be considered afresh in terms of entire impact on economy and society, with a perspective that is sensitive to women's needs and conditions and aims at a more desirable social distribution.

The World Bank Development Report (1992) states that success in promoting economic growth and poverty reduction is most likely when governments compliment market, dramatic failures result when they 'conflict'. The Report recommends for a 'market-friendly' approach and suggests that the governments need to intervene in those areas where markets prove inadequate. Kurien (1994), by contrast, argues that economic growth under globalisation is by definition based on exclusion of large sections of the society. Women, obviously, form the large part of this excluded section. Patnaik (1992) argues that globalisation of Indian agriculture is, in fact, 'recolonisation' of Indian agriculture. This trend is reflected in displacement of domestic food grains by export crops for international market. She also points out that the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world, including India, have historically contributed to a more diversified consumption basket for their people. Ghosh (1996) points out major flaw in the analysis contained in the HDR Report - 1995 and argues that the gender-sensitivity of the Report is restricted to how these policies can effect women in the least negative ways.

Krishnaraj (1998) posits that pre-reform development model though not good either for poor and women, did achieve a few things<sup>14</sup>, while the new policy drops all pretensions about equality - whether between classes or between genders. She further argues that

neither state nor the market has answers for women, because they lack a built-in basic justificatory principle of development that includes promotion of common goods, gender equality and instruments to safeguard that principle.

This is a false understanding that state is retreating in India. It is very much present to promote the interests of those who matter (Kurien, 1992; Krishnaraj, 1998). Krishnaraj (ibid) further argues that it is 'polyarchy' and not democracy that is present in India and a deeper analysis of changing nature of the state and women's relation to it is needed. While state is not retreating, market is not neutral either. It facilitates more development in more developed areas with no incentives for backward regions, people and backward gender. It reproduces power relations, between the have-nots and the haves and between the genders (Krishnaraj, 1998). Therefore, in Indian context, market needs to be regulated. Sen (1993) recommends removal of irrational controls, creative use of market mechanism and 'more' state intervention and action in these areas.

Market confers differential advantages<sup>15</sup> on those participating in them. Kurien (1992) strongly argues that markets are neither intrinsically biased nor unfair. It evolves and functions within definite socio-economic structures and relationships. It is the latter, which shapes up the impacts that markets have on society. Market is, thus deeply embedded in, and constitutive of, relations of class, caste, locality and gender (Harriss-White and Janakrajan, 1997).

Liberalisation, in the sense of de-bureaucratisation, in India does not exist, either. We, instead witness more bureaucratic arrangements with the provision for a hierarchical women development bureaucracy, right from the top to bottom (Haxar, 1988). The NPP envisages a 'feminised bureaucracy' of the above stated model created from top to bottom. Furthermore, market, even if plays an alternative to stifling bureaucratic control, hardly serves the purpose because, it operates in a system which facilitates greater freedom of action for large capital, both domestic and industrial, rather for a real liberation of the capabilities (Ghosh, 1996) of working women and men. 'Capability', define, Dreze and Sen (1996:10-11) refers to the alternative combinations from which a person can chose; the notion of capability is essentially one of freedom - the range of options a person has in deciding what kind of life to lead. Poverty of a life, in this view, lies not merely in the impoverished state in which a person actually lives, but also lack of real opportunity - given by social constraints as well as personal circumstances.

A cultural fall out of 'globalisation' is ideological change<sup>16</sup> that has a crucial impact on the situation of women in Indian society. A combination of consumerism and various religious fundamentalisms operates in a curious way to restrict female freedom and determine a set of material aspirations, which reduce the space (Ghosh, 1994) available for a genuine liberation of both the sexes. The manufacture of culture through mass media is an insidious process taking place under liberalisation.

The concepts of empowerment and globalisation go hand-in-hand and the language of empowerment has become a convenient cloak for shelving equality (Krishnaraj, 1998). Mohanthy (1995) argues that 'growth with social justice' has now been abandoned for 'development with empowerment' (market with safety net). The 'empowerment', 'civil society' and 'democratisation' form the new package of liberalisation discourse, which on their face value appear to respond to the long-standing demands of struggling groups. However, the way empowerment is being provisioned and attempted, raises serious doubts about empowerment itself. Mohanthy (ibid) further argues that current trend of promoting 'people's empowerment' through the NGO sector has, in fact, disabling consequences for the oppressed people. It not only seeks to disorient them from demanding that the state agencies deliver the goods, but also shifts the focus from struggle politics to NGO activity.

Dawn report (1991) suggested that the discussion of empowerment need to go beyond being good for women to the discussion of empowerment as critical for building accountability into the functioning of the public realm - both the state and the institutions of civil society - thereby the possibility of their transformations along with the transformation of gender relations. The Beijing Conference<sup>17</sup> has conveyed Indian women's movement that transformation required claiming of power; that the women's movement to become effective, there is a need to change the very basis of 'negotiations'. What is now required is to have the power and knowledge to 'direct' policy; to replace leadership; to claim space - rather than appeal for justice (Jain, 1996).

This is an appropriate time to assert the difference between the concept of power placed within empowerment framework, and simultaneously, placed in the context of overall struggle for transformation carried on by social movements resisting the onslaught of the market and trying to rebuild the "life-world system" (Chapters - 3 and 4). The range and scope of feminist inquiry now goes for questioning of power relationship in all areas of human life.



The official efforts for making women an independent agency, the theoretical underpinning for which is provided by the 'gender perspective' (Kabeer, 1994) continue apace in India. The year 2001 was declared as the 'year for women empowerment'. The creation of a Woman Development Corporation, Woman Commission and Woman Employment Exchange in Bihar is the local extension of this national programme. The basic question is - can these efforts change the 'masculine' and 'patriarchal' culture of the whole functioning of the existing agencies even if women instead of men run these agencies?

### **3.3 Movement**

Studies about impact of mobilisation on women are few and scanty in India and their effect on gender relations is a subject yet to be explored. Though social protest movements, of which women essentially form a part, are present in every part of world - developing or developed alike - in various forms and shades. Studies about these are rare. One edited collection of women's movement in global perspective by Amrita Basu appeared in 1999 in India. This volume sheds light on the fact that women's movements that define themselves as autonomous from male-dominated parties and institutions are often closely intertwined with broader movements for social change. Studies compiled in this volume suggest that women's struggles form a subset of struggles for civil rights and human rights. The initial motivation comes from a sense of shared oppression with other groups that have been denied their rights. Patriarchal domination has no more been apt in and of itself to provide a catalyst to women's activism than class exploitation is likely in and of itself to stimulate class struggle (Basu, 1999:10). These movements are associated with a broad range of struggles for national liberation, human rights, and democratisation of authoritarian regimes. In the post-colonial world, nationalist movements often provided opportunities for large-scale women's activism and with this opportunity came the recognition of gender-specific concerns. This also applies to Indian context, where feminist consciousness grew out of the womb of national liberation struggle and feminism posed challenge to nationalism during pre-colonial period (Chapter -3).

A fine example of how feminism grew out of the womb of Palestinian movement for self-determination is presented by Jad (1999). From questioning the exclusionary and violent practices of the Israeli state with respect to their community, Palestinian women began to challenge the exclusions and violence to which they as women were subjected. Their

growing sense that the Palestinian leadership failed to reward women's contributions as it has not accorded them political power further contributed to feminist consciousness.

Another example of how women were active in peasant organisations from the 1930s on and in worker's movements in 1950s and 1960s in Philippines is presented by Santiago (1999). These joint actions proved to be instrumental in bringing about some beneficial legislations that made provisions for higher wages, health benefits, longer maternity leaves, equal pay for equal work etc. for women. The women's movement in Philippines also played an important role in overthrowing the Marcos dictatorship. In Bangladesh, the activities of some non-governmental development organisations have remained engaged in 'conscientisation' and solidarity building among the rural poor (Jahan, 1999).

Women's movements in Latin America and Africa reflect multi-dimensional character. In Chile, women's movement has been closely connected with working-class struggles. They played an important role in struggles against class and gender inequality in nitrate mining towns in the north during early 20th century. Women, in Chile, fought against the Pinochet dictatorship as well. Their rallying cry was "Democracy in the country and in the home" (Frohmann and Valdes, 1999). In Brazil (ibid), Mexico (ibid), Chile (ibid), and Peru (Blondet, 1999) the economic hardships that poor urban women experienced provided the impetus for their activism.

Authoritarian states tend to destroy political parties and other autonomous institutions. State violence, like domestic violence often acts as a catalyst for women's resistance. Women's exclusion from established institutions can lead them to mobilise resistance through informal networks. Women's mobilisation in the movements carried on by the disappeared in Argentina, Brazil (Soares, et al, 1999) and Chile (ibid, 1999) during authoritarian rule provides excellent illustrations of this phenomenon. This reminds me of 1975 -77 phase in India, when many women's groups sprang up after the Parliament was suspended and national emergency was declared (Chapter - 3). Women's groups, then, constituted an important part of the civil liberties movements.

In Mexico, "popular feminism" emerged when middle-class women, attacked by Right and the Catholic Church, sought alliances with working-class women and became active in industrial worker's unions (Lamas, et al, 1999). However, many middle-class women's movements failed to mobilise poor women by assuming that class interests can be

subordinated to gender interests.

The cases of Nigeria and Kenya suggest that women's movements are often disabled by the state's attempts to define solutions to women's problems and create organisations that it can control. Abdullah (1999) describes the state-sponsored Better Life Programme as "Nigerian state pseudo feminism" and argues that women's movements must become autonomous in order to serve as dynamic forces for social change. Kenyan state has also undermined women's activism by co-opting many successful women's programmes and cultivating the dependence of women's organisations.

In Russia and Eastern Europe, extensive legislation designed to improve the position of women thwarted possibilities for them to organise independently around their own interests. Posadskaya (1999) argues that most women were so alienated from the Soviet Women's Committee, the official women's organisation during the communist regime that they were unresponsive to feminist appeals even after the demise of communism. In the Soviet Union in the early stages of liberalisation the slogan was - "Democracy without women is no democracy".

China, by contrast, provides a unique example of state-affiliated women's organisation that constitutes the backbone of the women's movement. Zhang (1999) states that the official All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) has acquired a broader support-base among poor rural women than predominantly urban women's groups have achieved. Formed in 1949, the ACWF worked closely with the Chinese Communist Party and gained legitimacy among rural women at the grassroots level for its association with nationalism and communism. With ninety-eight thousand full-time cadres on the state payroll, the ACWF exercises the means to implement state policy. By contrast, independent women's groups are formed only in the late 1980s and lack access to comparable networks and resources.

In the United States, poor women of colour have redefined the priorities of the women's movement and sustained it amid the challenges it has confronted in the 1990s (Wolfe and Tucker, 1999). The authors also find that black women have been much more receptive than white women to the demands of the women's movement in the United States and Western Europe. In 1970, only 37 percent of the white women compared to 60 percent of black women believed that feminist activism was necessary; by 1985 the gap had narrowed, the black women (with 78 percent) were still significantly more supportive than

white women (with 72 percent) of women's rights (Klein, 1987:27). In France and Italy, women's groups worked with the Communist party and its trade union allies to wage struggles to legalise abortion. Jenson (1999) notes that women's movement in Western Europe often seek to increase their strength by forming alliances with political parties and trade unions. The Brazilian women's movement has also pursued a similar strategy.

In India, grassroots rural movements are not confined to women's activism around gender inequality (Kumar, 1999) though they embrace gender issues. Basu (1992) argues that women's movement in India has been radicalised by the activism of poor women, who have not only raised employment and wage demands but have also fought domestic violence.

The Indian case represents many of these trends stated above in global contexts (Chapter - 3). I chose radical left movement, i.e. Naxalite movement for the purpose of this study as it has led women to emerge as strong mobilisers around class as well as gender contours. This has led to develop the feminist consciousness of its own kind, in Bihar (Chapter - 11).

#### **4. THESIS STRUCTURE**

This thesis is bigger than a normal thesis size. In fact, the initial conception of this study was to explore the liberating potential of market options for women in a north Bihar village - namely Tikapatti. To this, mobilisation as the comparative catalyst for liberation was added. This, obviously, expanded the whole structure of the thesis. Therefore, this study culminated into a bigger (than normal) size of thesis containing altogether twelve chapters. For a clear presentation, I have organised ten chapters into four subsequent parts. The Introduction and Conclusion are excluded.

Part-I (The Theoretical Underpinnings) delves into the global theoretical discourse about women liberation; traces the processes of women liberation movement underlying different theoretical bases, global as well as local in Indian context; and, presents a survey of women's studies body of literature. This part contains three chapters:

In Chapter Two, I address the central theme of the thesis – what liberation does mean for women in 'gendered' sense of the term and subsequently, explore the routes to liberation from a theoretical perspective.

In Chapter Three, women liberation movement (WLM henceforth) in India is treated as an evolutionary process beginning from a 'contemptuous' to a 'commitment' in status; from an 'exclusive' to 'inclusive' in nature; from a 'class' to 'mass' in character; from 'urban' to 'rural' in coverage; and from 'women' to 'human' in essence.

In Chapter Four, I argue that human history has so far remained the history of the ruling gender in the same way as it has remained the history of the ruling classes. Women's studies body of literature is viewed here as a 'movement from above' to resist this arbitrary worldview of the all-existing knowledges and to develop the alternative worldview of knowledges.

With Part - II (The Setting, Epistemology and Methodology), I enter the setting - the state of Bihar. 'Where' and 'how' this study has been carried on - the whole processes of making of this thesis is also described in this part, which contains two chapters:

Chapter Five provides a background for the empirical sites - Purnea and Jehanabad - in north and central Bihar respectively. The dominant change that has occurred during stipulated period (early 1970s to late 1990s) is change in power relations between privileged and unprivileged groups as well as between the genders in rural society. The new power relationships are expressed in terms of social networking and resource profile maintenance for transactions and markets through different social, cultural, economic and political means and sharing of all these by women across all classes in different ways and varied forms, in some parts. In some other, this is expressed in terms of direct conflicts between privileged and unprivileged groups, often leading to a mutual agreement between the conflicting parties over the issues involved. Women across all classes directly or indirectly experience and share this whole conflicting situation. These two distinct expressions of power relations may be seen as representative expressions in the north and the central Bihar regions, respectively. A diverse analysis of these processes is attempted (in Parts III and IV below) separately.

Chapter Six is about research Methods, i.e. how this study has been carried on. This chapter describes the complex and multi-linear processes of exploration. Study of human behaviour that a social science research endeavor does, becomes more complex when involves a non-material issue like 'liberation', which may be explored, assessed, and evaluated through material and non-material 'reflections'. I argue that real lives

are qualitative, therefore, a social science research endeavour needs to be sensitive to this aspect. My emphasis is on what emerges from the ground of my research universe and from the experience of its actors rather than any pre-construct in my mind. I pursue precisely such an exploratory effort with this study.

With Part - III (Women Liberation: the Market Option), I enter the main empirical site, the village Tikapatti. This part contains four chapters - seven, eight, nine and ten - all about the village. This village is a "key hole" for the region with diverse characteristics and in no way could be treated as a standard village scattered across north Bihar.

In Chapter Seven, I explore as how and in what ways and forms, the structural changes have transformed the village society since inception of the new technology. This chapter relates to chapter four as this represents the empirical site for north Bihar where the conflicts between the 'productive forces' and 'production relations' (as I argue in Chapter - 5) appear to be resolved through market options. This is an independent chapter on agrarian structure of the village with a separate section about cash cropping. This chapter serves as the setting for the next three chapters (seven, eight and nine).

In Chapter Eight, I explore as how market opportunities have acted as a 'catalyst' in affecting women's productive regime across different economic classes and how they have enabled them emerge as stronger (than before) economic actors in recent years. This chapter also evaluates as how far are women able to carve out space for themselves to establish their agency in productive regime.

The associated enquiry in Chapter Nine is about how their stake as producers helps them assert stronger roles as 'reproducers'. I argue that reproduction is the basic production process and production is the 'means' for sustaining of this basic production process. This is a 'reversal' of the dominant paradigm relating to production and reproduction, which assigns centre stage to the former and peripheral to the later.

In Chapter Ten, I argue that the overall change in economic and social environment provides avenues for further change in whole set of traditional forms of gender relations. This culminates into new gender-relational constructs in the families. The dominant expression of these new constructs is the emergence of newer forms of households in Tikapatti during last decades. These newly emerged households are challenging patriarchal values across all the economic classes in their own forms and ways. And,

this has definite implications for men as well. A brief discussion over what all these analyses communicate about the presence of different feminist positions is also attempted. This is connected to Maslowian hierarchies of human liberation (Chapter -2).

With Part-IV (Jahanabad: the Mobilisation Option), I enter the secondary and comparative location of the fieldwork, i.e. Jahanabad district of central Bihar. This part consists of two chapters, eleven and twelve. Chapter eleven is about Jahanabad and with chapter twelve, I conclude this study.

In Chapter Eleven, I explore as how far has mobilisation acted as a 'catalyst' in liberating women from class and gender constraints and to what extent. I address the central theme of the thesis in the context of mobilisation as the optional route to women liberation. This chapter presents a contrast to the market driven changes in gender relations occurring in Tikapatti. This chapter relates to chapter four as this simultaneously represents the empirical site for central Bihar where the conflicts between the 'productive forces' and 'production relations' (as I argue in Chapter- 5) appear to be resolved through sustained mobilisation. The setting is sustained process of radical mobilisation against gender discrimination and exploitation embedded in economic, social and cultural milieu.

In Chapter Twelve (Conclusion) this study argues in favour of a 'feminine regime' of production appears to have emerged in Tikapatti against the backdrop of market-infused development. This study locates a gradual shift towards 'feminisation' of mobilisation strategy within radical movement in Jahanabad. These empirical findings make strong case for arguing in favour of a 'feminine vision' emerging from the grassroots. This study finally argues that this feminine vision has strong potential to provide grounds for constructing of a distinct feminist perspective, which I call the "Women's Worldview". And, this study opens up some fresh areas of exploration around these themes.

**PART – I**  
**THE THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS**

This Part contains first three chapters.

Chapter One delves into the global theoretical discourse about women liberation.

In Chapter Two processes of women liberation movement underlying different theoretical bases, global as well as local, in Indian context are traced and analysed.

Chapter Three presents a survey of women's studies body of literature.



## CHAPTER TWO

### WOMEN LIBERATION: INITIATING A DISCOURSE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Initiating a discourse about liberation the first quarry could be - liberation from what? An ideal response put forth may be - from overall inhuman life conditions that constrain our 'beings' from evolving up to the highest level of our 'human' potential. The subsequent quarry to follow may be - how to attain liberation? Answer is difficult indeed, because there exists vast gap between the two quarries, and many open-ended questions too. This chapter enters this vast gap to address the central theme of this thesis - what liberation does mean for women in 'gendered' sense of the term and subsequently, explores the routes to liberation from a theoretical perspective.

Women, in their quest for liberation, since last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been passionately engaged in discovering various routes to liberation across the globe. They began with proclaiming themselves as 'feminists' and travelled long to reach now, at the beginning of this century, at a stage where they wish to proclaim themselves as 'femaliest'. It is amazing to observe that Germaine Greer's quest for women liberation, which began from 'Female Eunuch', finds a fresh beginning in 'The Whole Woman'!

An exploration into women liberation cannot exclude an enquiry into what liberation does mean for human of the species in absolute sense of the term. In its absolute sense, liberation is the highest stage of human accomplishment, the 'end' of the life itself. In its 'gendered' sense, however, liberation may be the 'means' to this end. Women liberation is approached here as a 'means' to human liberation; as a 'process' towards the 'end', i.e. the highest stage of human accomplishment.

This chapter is arranged in four sections below. Section two carries a brief discussion over some specific gender-neutral and gendered approaches to liberation. A discourse over the routes to liberation follows in section three, which is divided into two broader sub-sections; each of these discusses 'development' and 'movement' as two distinct

routes to liberation. Section four contains a summary of the preceding sections and analyse the themes, arguments, emanating from overall discussion. Section five concludes with a conceptual framework.

## **2. SELF- ACTUALISATION: THE 'END'**

It is amazing to see as how Maslow and Marx; Indian philosophical tradition and Western psychological position; benevolent patriarch Gandhi and staunch feminist scholar and activist Simone de Beauvoir – all converge in their responses to this basic question and how all of them diverge on suggesting pathways to liberation. While, Maslow defines liberation as **self-actualisation**, which is the 'highest ceiling of human nature', the Indian philosophical tradition views liberation as **self-realisation**<sup>1</sup> as a 'journey from myself to my (self)'. And, Marx envisions a society, in which human could really enjoy 'liberation'; a society - capable of creating a set of social conditions for human being - in which meaningful work could become the intrinsic moral value that makes sense of human existence. Liberation in its absolute sense is, thus, self-actualisation or self-realisation and it is the Marxian ideal of society in which individual 'self' could actually be 'realised'.

### **2.1 Maslow<sup>2</sup>: The Higher Ceilings for Human Nature**

Maslow's thesis of 'Hierarchy of Needs', explains that there are five levels of human needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow in Colin, 1979). These human needs according to Maslow, arrange themselves in hierarchies of prepotency; as one becomes satisfied, another takes over. When 'physiological needs' are satisfied, 'safety needs' - the need for a regular employment, protection from criminals, the need from freedom from pain and fear that could give a sense of a predictable orderly world – now emerges. Maslow observes that it is persistent lack of the safety and security needs that results into the compulsive-obsessive neuroses.

Next level is 'love needs' - a person with a fair degree of security and safety, i.e. with a stable place of abode and a regular income - now begins to feel keenly the need for friends, for a sweetheart or wife, children, for a place in group. Maslow observes that it is the thwarting of these needs that is the chief cause of maladjustment in relatively well-fed and well-housed societies. After the 'love needs' are satisfied, there emerges the 'esteem

needs' - the need for a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves; the need for self-respect and for the esteem of others.

Finally, it is the need for **self-actualisation** - to become everything that 'one is capable of becoming' that takes over<sup>3</sup>. In one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another, it may be expressed athletically, and in still some other it may be expressed in painting, writing, or inventions. The self-actualisation includes the need to know and to understand 'oneself' and it is this highest stage of human accomplishment where one is liberated.

Self-actualisation, however, is not the straightforward universal possibility<sup>4</sup>. Maslow's own realisation just before his death, that given the comfortable material conditions and given the 'naturally transcending' human nature why does some people become self-actualizers and why not the others, finally led him to say:

Growth has not only rewards and pleasure, but also many intrinsic pains and always has. (Maslow, in Colin, 1979:202)

## 2.2 Marx: The Estranged Labour

Nature is man's *inorganic* body.....Man *lives* on nature - means that nature is his *body*, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature. (Marx, 1977:72, in Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844, italics original)

Marx states that it is the **estranged** labour that estranges from man, nature and his species<sup>5</sup>; it changes for him the life of the 'species' into a means of individual life. Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. His own life is an object for him, and this is why, his activity is spontaneous, free activity. His conscious free labour objectifies himself. Estranged labour reverses this relationship, thereby transforming life only a means to life, which is the end and objective in itself.

The estranged labour thus, estranges from man, his own body as well as external nature and his spiritual and human aspect. This estrangement is the estrangement of man from man ((Marx, *ibid*, p. 72-75). This degrading of the 'objective' to a 'means', is the curse of

the human life and therefore, Marx proclaims that human liberation lies in liberation from the estranged labour, and the essence of liberation is human's 'realization', objectification of himself, that is possible in a society capable of creating conditions enabling human being to become what he is capable of being.

### 2.3 Simone de Beauvoir: Presence of Own 'Self'

'Self-actualisation' is visualized as the essential condition for women liberation by the leading feminist Simone de Beauvoir as well as by Betty Friedan. Women liberation lies in independent existence of women beings and realization of their own 'self'. Women liberation, according to Beauvoir is:

".....to refuse to confine her to the relation she bears to men, not to deny them to her; let her have her independent existence and she will continue nonetheless to exist for him also; mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the one another. The reciprocity of their relations will not do away with the miracles - desire, possession, love, dream, adventure - worked by the division of human beings into two separate categories; and the words that move us - giving, conquering, uniting - will not lose their meaning. On the contrary, when we abolish the slavery of half of humanity, together with the whole system of hypocrisy that it implies, then the 'division' of humanity will reveal its genuine significance and the human couple will find its true form...." (Beauvoir, in Sanghvi, 1986, underscore mine).

While making a choice for each other (woman and man) she suggests, '... all choices, agreements, and refusals should be made independently of institutions, conventions and motives of self-aggrandisements.' This staunch disclaimer of marriage institution believed that balanced couples did exist,

"...sometimes even within the framework of marriage..... rare are those who are at once lovers and friends but do not seek in each other their sole reasons for living. (Beauvoir, ibid, underscore mine)."

It is obvious that 'not seeking sole reason for living in each other' implies seeking sole reason for living in their own 'selves', which Beauvoir believes, could never be detrimental to their 'union'.

Betty Friedan has devoted a full chapter to Maslow, in *Feminine Mystique* (1968) and has quoted his views on self-actualisation. She argues that liberation is not simply a matter of 'losing chains'<sup>6</sup>. Taking strands from and in full agreement with Maslow she suggests that

women should face up to their potentialities of self-actualisation and stop behaving like zombies. They can actualise their creative potential and it is the male-created **feminine mystique** that is preventing them.

## **2.4 Gandhi: The Feminine Philosopher**

The benevolent patriarch<sup>7</sup> Mahatma Gandhi also visualise 'self-actualisation' as the essential condition for women liberation. He proclaimed during freedom struggle that if freedom was the birth right of every nation and individual (and if Congressmen were determined to achieve it), they should, '...first liberate their women from the evil customs and conventions that restrict their all around healthy growth (Gandhi in 1929, in Kishwar, 1986, underscore mine).' Gandhi believed in equal dignity of and absolute equality between women and men. He accepted the logical consequences of this 'equality' and strongly favoured women's absolute freedom for their 'self realisation'.

The basics of the Gandhian philosophy revolve round non-violence, which is a 'feminine' concept. The 'quiet' strength, firm resistance, self-sacrifice and endurance, all these feminine traits are central to the concept of 'non-violence'. Gandhian philosophy assigns feminine power a superior and central place as against the aggressive violent masculine nature of power. This is why men, according to Gandhi needed to emulate<sup>8</sup> women's quiet strength to 'feminise' politics. His preference for a feminine courage over masculine strength clearly suggests a feminine vision. I have argued elsewhere (Sinha, 1995) that Gandhian philosophy is basically a feminine philosophy.

## **3. ROUTES TO WOMEN LIBERATION**

It is argued here that women liberation is a 'means', a 'process' to human liberation. Development is one route to this process; movement<sup>9</sup> is the other. While mainstream development is centrally concerned with liberation from material deprivation that inhibits the satisfaction of the 'lower levels' of human needs, the agenda of women's liberation movement ranges from material to cultural, from survival to self-esteem, from deprivation to recognition, and from 'lower to higher levels' of human needs. Dominant feminist perspectives are arranged here under two broad categories: one, those which view 'development' as the route to liberation in any form; and the other who reject 'development' for any reason, and view 'movement' as the alternative route to liberation.

How do dominant feminist perspectives look at women liberation? Where do they locate the genesis of women oppression? What options do they suggest for their liberation? I attempt to examine different feminist perspectives from these angles below. A brief comment over how far the dominant feminist perspectives themselves are free from 'philosophical patriarchy' appears to be relevant here, before I proceed.

### 3.1 The Philosophical Patriarchy

The dominant feminist perspectives<sup>10</sup> are carved out of dominant contemporary father philosophies. While **Liberal feminism** is carved out of its contemporary liberal philosophy, **WID** is a distinct blend of liberalism and modernism. The **Socialist-feminist** and **Neo-Marxist feminist** perspectives are carved out of Marxism and Dependency theories, respectively. **Radical feminist** perspective emerged as a powerful reaction to the Marxist-feminist perspective with its independent (of a father philosophy) identity, yet a section of this stream with **Postmodernism**, got a post to lean against. The process of liberation from philosophical patriarchy began with the radicals, a section of which together with the Marxists were later engaged in evolving a **Marxist-feminist synthesis**. And, now completely dismantling the philosophical patriarchy, the **Feminine Principle** has emerged as a more nurturing and holistic feminist perspective.

### 3.2 Development: One Route To Liberation

The late 20th century liberal bourgeois feminism began with the 'obstacles' approach and 'obstacles' identified were 'non-development'. It was assumed that 'development' could have the capability to eliminate obstacles and liberate women. Liberalism, in general, has faith in the inherent viability and goodness of the dominant capitalist political, economic & social structures. It recognizes the gender inequalities<sup>11</sup> as 'aberrations' that could be rectified through legal procedures and attitudinal changes. Basing on these assumptions the Developmentist feminist perspectives have travelled a long way.

### 3.2.1 Liberal World View and Liberating Potential

The liberal philosophy believes that the rational individual, logically exists prior to society and society is a sum total of separate and unconnected individuals (Srikantha, 1997). The 'normative dualism' embedded in the liberal concept of human being, views mind as separate from and higher than, the body because it is the site of what is essentially human (Jagger, 1983). The liberal thought contains a series of binary opposition like mind / body, culture / nature, mental / manual, rational / instinctual etc. (Kabeer, 1994:27).

The separation of 'means' and 'ends' is a hallmark of liberal economics. The model of the atomised self-interested individuals is at the core of the liberal world-view; private property is viewed as a critical institutional support for ensuring rational competitive behaviour and the magic of market lies in its potential for promoting choice with efficiency. Thus, economy according to the liberal worldview is composed of operational individual units.

The neo-liberal ideology has discovered dismantling of bureaucratic controls and greater reliance on free market forces to allocate national resources as the most efficient route to economic recovery (Colclough and Manor, 1991). The theoretical underpinnings of market economy posits the same abstract individual as the ultimate entity in society; concept of the free, independent, individual as the basic unit of the society and society as an aggregation of such individuals.

Arther Lewis (1955) ascribes highly liberating potential to the industrial growth for women. He believes that women benefit from growth even more than men.

Woman gains freedom from drudgery, is emancipated from the seclusion of the household, and gains at last the chance to be a full human being, exercising her mind and her talents in the same way as men. It is open to men to debate whether economic progress is good for men or not, but for women to debate the desirability of economic growth is to debate whether women should have the chance to be beasts of burden, and to join the human race. (Lewis, 1955:422, underscore mine)

The liberal philosophy assumed that technological change would reduce the social impact of biological asymmetry between men and women's physical strength. While it would

release women from the time-consuming drudgery of housework, the birth-control technology would free them from involuntary reproduction.

The modernist perspective continues to believe that underdevelopment in the Third World is caused by traditional values and social structures; that the basis for development lies in the diffusion of traditional values, capital, technology and political institutions from the West and will traverse the same path of development as the West (Bandarage, 1983). The liberal feminism and WID stream both fully subscribe to this view that the benefits of this western development model have accrued 'mainly' to men and women are almost completely left out.

The modernisation theorists and economists both ascribed highly liberating potential<sup>12</sup> to the market as well. What remains outstanding is better evidence on who benefits, who does not and how much. For clearly, the "magic of market forces" does not produce gender-neutral outcomes.

### **3.2.2 Liberal Feminism and WID School**

The Liberal feminist' perception of women subordination to men and system and sexual inequality is a 'deviation' from the general norms of equality and justice for all individuals that can be rectified to a greater extent, if women are integrated into public sphere as the equals of men. Liberal feminists argue that the root of women's economic marginalisation lies in the separation of domestic and public spheres and their confinement to the domestic sphere (Friedan, 1968; Mill, 1970 and others) and therefore, **the route to women liberation is their integration into public spheres as the equals of men.**

WID perspective was the feminist crusade against the failure of the 'liberating potential' of the liberal philosophy and modernist paradigm. A distinct blend (Bandarage, 1984; Kabeer, 1994 etc.) of Modernisation theory and liberal feminism, the WID perspective posited that the mainstream development process has excluded women and thereby denied them of its benefits. WID perspective crusaded against this gender-discriminatory nature and behaviour of the International Development Bureaucracy (IDB hereafter) and called for integration of women into the overall development process, for which they ought to be provided with adequate education and training. Therefore, **integration of**



**women into the mainstream development process, whereby their economic status could be enhanced, is the route to women liberation.**

The liberal feminism together with the WID school of thought led by Betty Friedan and Ester Boserup, respectively, performed a great task in the evolution of the official<sup>13</sup> feminism. The limitations of this perspective are a reflection of the ideological limitations of its progenitors - the Liberalism and the Modernism.

### **3.2.3 Development of Official Feminism: 'Welfare' to 'Efficiency'**

It is customary to mention here that the evolution of the WID School goes back to Ester Boserup's publication *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), which served as the fundamental text for the UN Decade for Women. Her confidence in the planning process (despite her firm disagreement with the colonial exploitation) remained a bottleneck in liberating WID perspective from its father philosophies. While Tinker (1976) retaining her faith in planning located three types of planning errors<sup>14</sup> responsible for gender-discriminatory behaviour of the development community, Rogers (1980) broke away with the above approach and criticized the neo-classical notion of universal economic rationality which continued to perceive women as 'illogical' and 'irrational' beings and therefore deprived them of incentives to participate in the development process. Boserup argued strongly against biological generalisations about the division of labour. Rogers made explicit distinction between the sexes as 'physical distinction' and gender as 'social and cultural' in order to attack the biological explanations of sex-roles which underpinned development planning.

Prior to the declaration of the UN Women's decade, women were brought into development policy and practice on sex-specific terms, in their traditional capacity as housewives, mothers and 'at-risk producers' confined to the 'welfare' sector, which acquired a marginal status within development. While men entered the development policy process as household heads and productive agents, women entered this arena as passive recipients rather than contributors, clients, and producers.

Boserup, first crusaded against the sociological sex-role theory<sup>15</sup> practiced by the IDB. She made a strong case for women's productive roles in direct challenge to the traditional equation between women and domesticity. WID enforced the IDB shift their approach

from 'welfare' to 'equality' towards women. The World Plan of Action that emerged out of the 1975 International Women's Conference contained a bold women's agenda calling for the achievement of equality between the sexes within the context of changed relations between North and South (Maguire, 1984). This required a radical shift in resource redistribution throughout the development process and obviously, was difficult to translate into policy. Therefore, new focus on women, within the IDB was accommodated<sup>16</sup> within the 'poverty alleviation and 'basic needs' programme framework.

WID advocacy gradually succeeded in making women 'visible' as a category and 'recognized' as a constituency within the IDB. With a focus on 'poverty alleviation' and 'basic needs' halfway equality was attained. By the late 1980s, it succeeded in shifting the grounds for investing development resources in women from **welfare** to **efficiency** and from **need** to **merit** (Jaquette, 1990). Boserup accepted fundamental wisdom of market model and strongly supported a market conception of merit claims. Rogers (1980) took a radical position and reversed the early WID approach of 'integrating women into development' by 'connecting development (itself) with women'. In contrast to the early WID approach that stressed 'adverse impact of development on women', Rogers stressed the adverse impact of women's exclusion on development. Now, the issue was not that women needed development, it was instead development that needed<sup>17</sup> women.

### 3.2.4 Gender Perspective and Social Relations Of Gender

What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. A Negro is a Negro. He only becomes a slave in certain relations. Torn from these relationships, it is no more capital than gold itself is money. (Marx, in Rubin, 1975:158).

The significance of social relations in ascribing a meaning and a place to people and things is vividly illustrated in the above quotation. Rubin has used this quotation as analogous to explain the gender relations.

What is a domesticated woman? A female of the species. A woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute, or a human dicta-phone in certain relations. Torn from these relationships, she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money. (Rubin, 1975:158).

That 'social relations' belongs to the realm of consciousness, consciousness is rooted in matter is evident from another quote from Marxist doctrine below.

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (Marx, 1968:29)

Taking strand from the 'consciousness' aspect of Marxist doctrine and advocating for strategic 'use' of the 'contradictions' within the official development community for creating 'space' for a feminist agenda through bringing in 'power relations' as the mechanism - a 'middle path' to women liberation via transformation is discovered by the SOW (Subordination of Women) group of feminists which later developed as the GAD (Gender And Development) perspective. GAD ascribes 'social relations of gender' as the central analytical category, which mediates the ways in which individuals experience structural forces.

Human has a unique quality to resist, chose and interpret, despite the hegemonic forms of rules and practices about 'masculinity' and 'femininity' existing in different societies. It is this 'unique' quality of human that puts them in 'actor' position; tempts them become a 'chooser' amidst bleak opportunities for choice; and make them feel 'powerful' even in most 'powerless' life conditions. Gramsci (1971) introducing the notion of power through the concept of 'hegemony'<sup>18</sup> shows that power can never operate in a singular and mechanical way, i.e. that of dominant over dominated. It is dependent for its recognition on the dominated. This concept of power assigns domination a relational status, i.e. the oppressed too holds power (over the oppressor) to 'resist'. Domination carries within it the seeds of its resistance. From this relational status of 'power' the concept of 'empowerment' emerges.

This perspective drew 'gender' - a sociological term - to describe male-female differences in social behaviour posing a challenge to economic determinism in development policy and practice. It is now widely accepted that gender, the way we behave as men and women, is predominantly a part of our culture rather than a part of our biology. The gender roles vary radically across societies and therefore, gender is a socio-cultural construct. Jagger (1983:126) argues that biology is 'gendered' as well as sexed.

GAD views gender relations as full ensemble of social relationships through which the female of the human species becomes the 'domesticated woman'. Rubin (1975) argues that male and female of human species are biologically similar in most ways and distinguished from each other only by a small range of biological differences. Gender

relations suppress natural similarities between the sexes as well. Birke (1986) argues that the fit between masculinity / femininity is more diffuse and it is the socially differentiated arrangements of gender that offers an explanation for the very different ways in which men and women experience the world. It is relevant to argue here that the popular quote<sup>19</sup> from **The Second Sex** (1987) that 'women are not born, they are created' is self-explanatory to support the Social relations of gender position.

The gender perspective in its bid to developing a middle path somewhere between the structural determinism of certain Marxist accounts and the liberal individualism of WID scholarship, while retains one<sup>20</sup> of the basic tenets of the former - as its foundation, it reasserts faith in development potential of the later. This perspective (Rubin, 1975; Whitehead, 1979; Young et al, 1981; Beneria and Sen, 1982) assumes that women subordination cannot be solved by state intervention alone and empowerment of women is essential for their self-reliance. The integration into social production is a necessary but not sufficient condition for women liberation; **therefore, the essential route to women liberation is to challenge the gender division of labour that is the basis of core gender identities<sup>21</sup>.**

Gender perspective highlights the reproductive role of women assuming that gender is the prominent determinant of women's position in the society. Kinship and family relations are the relationship of everyday life that structure gender both as individual identity as well as social inequality. Domestic domain is the primary site of most social relations. Whitehead (1979:11) characterizes such relationship as gender-ascriptive. Its main areas of concern are private spheres. The significance of familial arrangements in the early years of a child's life in shaping a sense of selfhood, including a core gender identity highlighted by feminist psychoanalysts (Chodorov, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Dinnerstein, 1977; Harding, 1981) also support this position.

GAD with a shift from 'women' to 'gender' as the key analytical category in development brings 'power relations' between men and women into the picture and represents a relational analysis of gender inequalities. Kabeer (1994) argues that just as a class analysis can be used to understand and address the problems of the poor, so too a gender analysis can be used to understand and address the problems of women's subordination.

Gender is an obvious constitutive principle of family and kinship relations, however, gender relations are reconstituted through the rules, procedures, practices and outcomes of other institutions of society including those of the market and the state. The gender perspective tends to reconstitute gender relations from a feminine worldview and trying to evolve a feminist theorisation of institutions. Gender operates both within and across institutions, as a pervasive allocational principle, linking production with reproduction, domestic with public domains, and the macro-economy with the micro-level institutions within which development processes take place.

### **3.3 Movement: The Other Route to Liberation**

Those who believe in movement as the only route to women liberation posit that the mainstream development is either 'exploitative' or 'reductionist' in nature containing no liberating potential in either way. To the upholder of the 'exploitation' theme development for a few is non-development for the mass and to the 'reductionist' theme development is 'maldevelopment'. Movementalist category contains three main streams: the **Marxist**, which believes in overthrowing of the world capitalist system as a whole; their agenda is inclusive and analysis predominantly economic. The **Radical**, which is against the dominant structure of patriarchy; their agenda is exclusive and analysis a biological-psychological mix. The **Feminine principle**, which is against the dominant world system, based on the western reductionist science and philosophy. Its agenda is inclusive and analysis ecological.

#### **3.3.1 The Marxist World View**

The core of Marxian notion of liberation is liberating individual and society from the tentacles of private ownership of the means of production and from the slavish subordination to the division of labour (Lang, 1979). Private property, according to Marx (1977) is the product, the result, and the necessary consequence, of **alienated labour** of the 'external relations of the worker to nature and to himself'. In Marxian worldview 'alienated' labour is:

Activity as suffering, strength as weakness, begetting as emasculating. (Marx and Engels, 1975:275, in *Collected Works*).

The Marxist philosophy attaches most significance to human labour and connects the process of liberation to labour itself. It is labour that created man. Marxist view of the human does not separate mind and body and therefore, does not assign superior / inferior place to mental / physical labour, respectively. Human labour is purposeful and reflective. It is unity and interpenetration of exploitation and alienation that is the nexus of servitude, which according to Mohit Sen (1987) is a seminal theoretical discovery of Marx. Therefore, **freedom in the labour process and through the labour process is essential for human emancipation.**

Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. Necessity is blind only insofar as it is not understood..... Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends.....Freedom of the will, therefore, means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with knowledge of the subject.....Freedom, therefore, consists in the control over ourselves, and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is, therefore, necessarily a product of historical development. (Marx, in Anti-Duhring, p.158, quoted in Mohit Sen, 1987)".

This provides the general approach of Marxism to freedom, i.e. choice but not arbitrariness, decision but not random fiat and freedom is illusory, if not based on knowledge. Marx perceived the problem of freedom for all humanity, not only because of his deep humanism, but also because of his scientific insight that viewed society as an interconnected whole with class struggle as a motor of historical progress in class divided societies.

Society, in Marxist worldview is an ensemble or network of relationships.

The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual, it is the ensemble of the social relations. (Marx and Engels, in Theses on Feuerbach, Selected Works, Vol. I, 1976:14).

The individual and society; the individual and the class to which he belonged represented not an identity but a unity, interpenetration and struggle of opposites. That is why in the same Communist Manifesto which stated that all recorded history is the history of class struggle and called upon the workers of the world to unite, Marx also envisioned the future communist society as:

An association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. (ibid, p. 127)

And,

".....as an organisation of production, in which ..... productive labour instead of being a means of subjugating men, will become means of emancipating.....by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full - in which, therefore, productive labour will become a pleasure instead of being a burden." (Marx, in Capital, Vol. 1, p. 408)

### 3.3.2 Marxist-feminist Perspective

The Marxist-feminist perspective taking strands from the classical premises of Engels believes that the genesis of female subordination is in private property, class hierarchy and the production of exchange value (Engels, 1976). Women liberation, therefore, is not possible within the prevailing capitalist system, and the **'pre-condition' for women's liberation from gender-role constraints is their 'integration into social production' within a socialist system.**

The traditional Marxist account of women's oppression begins with the 'original' division of labour in pre-class societies within a two-fold production process: the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a two-fold character: one, the production of the means of existence and the other the production of human beings themselves (Engels, *ibid*).

The first division of labour (was) that between man and woman for the propagation of children. It was a 'pure and simple outgrowth of nature' wherein man was provider of the means of subsistence, while **woman's concern was production and reproduction of human life.** Communities were based on mother-right and male-female contribution therein was complementary in nature (Engels, *ibid*).

The development of agriculture led to changes in the production relations and started generating surplus production resulting in accumulation of wealth. Men's control over wealth and their thrust to pass it on to identifiable heirs led to the overthrow of mother-right and laid the institutional foundations of women's subjugation, private property, monogamous marriage and patrilineal inheritance.

The first class opposition that appears in history, according to Engels, coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male.

Different feminist streams emanating from the Marxist worldview share some common starting points and diverged on some other issues. Such diversions have contributed to the development and expansion of Marxism. The feminist perspective carved out of dependency paradigm is one such development; the feminist extension of Rosa Luxemburg's thesis is another, that opened up analysis of women's labour worldwide - a perspective that went beyond the limited horizon of the industrialised societies (3.3.3 below). Gender perspective (3.2.4 above) is yet another development through which the sociological and cultural horizon of Marxist worldview is expanding. With these developments a deterministic and reductionist economic interpretation, a 'worm eye view' of the Marxist philosophical horizon is acquiring a 'bird eye view'.

### **3.3.3 Dependency Paradigm and Dependency-feminist Perspective**

Dependency paradigm views modern first world - third world relationship in terms of a metropolis-satellite or a centre-periphery kind of relationship, wherein Third World is linked to the First World by dependency syndrome. Dependency approach stresses the historically exploitative nature of this process attributing this to the inherent expansionist tendency of world capitalism and to its constant need to open up new markets, increasing the level of surplus extraction and accumulate capital. The capitalist interests, foreign and national, subordinate non-capitalist relations of production and tie the Third World countries into a web of economic and political dependency. The central theme of various schools of this thought is the pattern of Third World development can best be explained within a 'generic' model of capitalist development on a world scale.

Dependency feminist perspective locates the genesis of women exploitation in periphery-periphery scheme of relationship and views gender inequalities as part of larger systematic connections between different forms of inequalities at international, national, and household levels created by and essential for capitalist accumulation processes. This stream has emerged out of the Third World critique of Liberal-WID perspectives.



The Marxist anthropologists (Leacock, 1978, 1977; Saffioti, 1977; Leacock and Etienne, 1980) who have substantially contributed to this stream, argue that it was European colonialism that brought in private property, commodity production, cash nexus and western values that laid the foundation of both class and sexual inequality in plain pre-class societies characterized by reciprocal sex-roles and sexually egalitarian social structures. They posit that the development could not release women from oppressive social, economic and political institutions within this inegalitarian world order; it, instead, defined 'new conditions of constraints' (Leacock, 1977).

Dependency-feminist perspective extends Rosa Luxemburg's contrast<sup>22</sup> position vis-à-vis Marx to explain gender exploitation. Luxemburg posits that capitalism had always needed 'non-capitalist milieux and strata' for the extension of labour force, resources and above all the extension of markets. These non-capitalist 'milieux and strata' were initially the peasants and artisans with their 'natural economy', later the colonies. Without colonies, capital accumulation would come to a stop (Luxemburg, 1923:254-367, quoted in Mies, 1986). Pre-capitalist relation, therefore, is not only 'the last stage of capitalism' (Lenin, 1964, 1970) but is constant necessary condition for its survival according to Luxemburg.

Extending Luxemburg's (1951) thesis - that the pre-capitalist forms of production provided an essential 'subsidy' to capital accumulation - to feminist analysis dependency perspective argues that family is the primary site of such a pre-capitalist form of production which perform this 'subsidy' function (Saffioti, 1977). With the women's domestic labour analysed as 'subsidy' to the process of capital accumulation, one of the fences of the traditional Marxist analysis that locates women 'originally' in the private spheres having no 'relevance' to the working capital - collapsed.

### **3.3.4 The Super-exploitation Thesis**

The relevance of **domestic labour** to the **working capital** has been explored by a group of German feminists (Worlhof, 1978; Benholdt-Thomsen, 1981a; Mies, 1980, 1982, all quoted in Mies, 1986). This culminated into the **super-exploitation** thesis put forth by Maria Mies. This thesis posits that capitalist production process is a process of 'super-exploitation' of non-wage labourers (women, colonies, peasants) upon which wage labour exploitation is imposed. From this position exploitation of women is a form of super-

exploitation, for it is not based on the appropriation (by the capitalists) of the time and labour, beyond the 'subsistence' labour time (surplus labour) but of the time and labour 'necessary' for subsistence production itself (Mies, 1986:48). Mies calls this system of women's oppression and exploitation - **capitalist-patriarchy** (1986:37) the 'determinant' of which is **violence**.

Capitalism cannot function without patriarchy, that the goal of this system, namely the never-ending process of capital accumulation, cannot be achieved unless patriarchal man-woman relations are maintained or newly created..... Patriarchy thus constitutes the mostly invisible underground of the visible capitalist system. (Mies, 1986:38)

Women's relegation to the unpaid subsistence sector of both Third and First World economies has been described as 'housewifization'<sup>23</sup> (Mies, 1981, 1986; v. Worlhof, 1984 quoted in Mies, 1986) - a process of the same nature, whereby the subsistence labour of peasantry of the Third World was used to subsidise capital (Benholdt-Thomsen, 1981b).

This stream diverges from the traditional Marxist-feminist tenets in three ways:

- This breaks from the economic determinism and locates violence as the determinant of dominance in gender relations.
- This refutes the traditional scientific socialist belief that capitalism through its greed for never-ending accumulation or 'growth' has created the pre-conditions for women liberation, which could be realised under socialism.
- This refuses to accept class contradiction as 'primary' and assigns primary place to gender contradiction.

### 3.3.5 Class And Patriarchy: Quest For A Union

The 'patriarchy' and 'capitalism' are dialectical relations and their dissolution requires a dialectical analysis. This assumption led some feminists to initiate a thought provoking debate<sup>24</sup> over this issue. Then the manoeuvres for evolving a Marxist-feminist synthesis perspective, which was against capitalist patriarchy as a single dominant system, and which had inclusive agenda and predominantly economic analysis with a cognisance for biological, psychological, and cultural factors, were going on. This debate crystallized

powerful arguments in 1981, suggesting potentials / no-potential of a union between Marxism and Radicalism. Though two decade old, these arguments are still relevant for opening up a fresh debate over the issue, which is unresolved as yet. Some of these powerful arguments are summed up here:

Hartmann (1981) argues that Marxism is 'sex-blind' and feminism is 'history-blind' as well as 'insufficiently materialist'. She proposes for Marxist analysis to be used for its strength in understanding economic laws of motion and feminist analysis for its strength in understanding the particular predicament of women including the systematic character of gender relations. She advocates a more progressive union between Marxism and feminism' which requires improved intellectual understanding of relations between class and sex.

Young I. (1981) argues in favour of a unified theory based on the combine insights of Marxism and feminism, which can understand capitalist patriarchy as a single system in which the oppression of women is a core attribute. She proposes that such theory would take gender division of labour as a central category through which a Marxist-feminist theory can analyse production relations in a gender differentiated fashion.

Harding (1981) argues that Marxism is not only sex-blind but also sexist. The material base of patriarchy and capital is not only rooted in the economic aspects of the division of labour by gender in family but also in the biological and psychological birth of a social person. Capitalism and patriarchy are 'genetic siblings' and their partnership is a 'pact between genetic siblings.

Al-Hibri (1981) presents a new analysis of gender subordination and argues that capitalism is an advanced stage of patriarchy and the original patriarchal impetus can be found in male's perception of his exclusion from reproduction.

It was not private property, not natural law that made the male appropriate reproduction from female. Rather, it was his unabashed desire and struggle for immortality in a world that seemed determined to deny it to him. (Hibri, *ibid*)

Thus, man's change in thinking from a desire to control reproduction through control of the female to a desire to control production as a means of reproducing himself is the process whereby this transformation has taken place.

Folbre and Ferguson (1981) argues that there is contradictory relationship between patriarchy and capital. While the capitalist social relations have incorporated many forms of patriarchal domination, they have also weakened many others. They define women's reproductive work within capitalist system as sex-affective<sup>25</sup> production which, she argues, cannot be considered as less important than the other forms of labour.

Vogel (1981) argues in favour of a transcendence of the dualism between Marxism and feminism inherent in much of socialist-feminist writings and to accomplish this task she recommends to examine and develop the Marxist theoretical tradition itself.

Hicks and Stewart both see this union to lead to a narrow formulation and suggest cultural and consciousness components to be added to expand its horizon. Hicks (1981) advocates for a 'cultural Marxism'<sup>26</sup>, which incorporates the analysis of current political and economic trends, viewed through the concept of nonsynchrony<sup>27</sup> into the usual Marxist analytical framework. Stewart (1981) argues that a materialist theory of patriarchy is not sufficient for comprehending the relationship between class and gender hierarchies; therefore, the Marxist dichotomy between objective and subjective realities has to be dissolved first.

### **3.3.6 The Radicals: Quest For The 'Whole Personhood'**

The late 20th century women's movement sparked off, in late sixties, with a realization that the genesis of male dominance over female body (and personhood) laid in private spheres<sup>28</sup>. Women discovered more and more their bodies to be **alienated** from them and to be turned into objects for others. Millet (1970) argued that male dominance, or patriarchy had its genesis in private realm, i.e. men's control over women's bodies, particularly their sexuality and generative capacities. Radical feminists attempted their analysis within a psychoanalytical framework - an area underrepresented in the feminist discourse. It was a theoretical point of departure for many feminists in the USA, in France and West Germany - Millet, 1970; Mitchell, 1975; Irrigary, 1974; Janseen-Jurreit, 1976; Echols, 1989 and many others. Radicals proclaimed themselves as the 'only' feminists as they broke away from the progenitor tradition as well.

Bandarage (1984) argues that the birth of an explicitly women-centred radical feminism took place out of the womb of Marxist's bundle of limitations, which recognised the abstract forces of capitalism as the sources of women's oppression and ignored the exploitation of women by men. The result was the neglect of such issues as the oppression of women in pre-capitalist and socialist societies, the changing gender relations under capitalism and the cultural and psychological dimensions of sexual stratification.

The radicals are concerned mainly with the structure of male dominance and women subordination - a structure that they call **patriarchy**. The concept of patriarchy is 're-discovered' by them as a concept 'for struggle'. Radicals positing to entire personal relations as political issues and coining the slogan 'personal is political', have presented a complete anti-thesis to Leninism with its democratic centralism and dictatorship of the proletariat (Pasquinelli, 1981, quoted in Mies, 1986:30) on the one hand, and challenged the structural division of the bourgeois society between private and public, on the other. With introducing the 'body politics' as the 'first person politics' they opened up the entire domestic and intimate social relations for debate.

The analysis of and struggle against the universality of patriarchal violence against women within and beyond private spheres is another concern of the Radical feminists. The male violence manifested in rape, wife battery, prostitution, genital mutilation, dowry murders, femicide through modern techniques like medical sex-determination etc. are the expressions of universal patriarchy. Radicals call for global sisterhood and transcend all the boundaries of nationalism, racial feelings, colour biases; reduce the marked gap between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, educated and uneducated, lettered and unlettered, the cleavages of classes and differences of castes. Though liberation for them meant **liberation of their 'whole personhood' from patriarchy, the route to this they discovered and adopted was emulating of the male model itself**

Radicals kept on challenging Marxist categories and concepts, which led the Marxists-feminists 're-search' their position culminating into lively discussions in many countries<sup>29</sup> between them over exploring the possibilities for developing a synthesis (3.3.5 above) of the two positions. One section of the radicals moved into this direction.

The movement around the issue of violence analytically constructed and created a perception of women as the 'victim' and men as the 'perpetrator'. The simultaneous development was growing extremism within movement on their perception of women as 'victim', which culminated into **Lesbianism** embraced by the other section. The Leed's revolutionary feminist's slogan, 'feminism is the theory and lesbianism the practice' (Srikantha, 1997) reveals this extremism. Considering from the premise from which radical feminists start their analyses, Srikantha argues that lesbianism is a logical extension of radical feminism. Some of the early radicals (Kate Millet, Irigaray, Atkinson, Echols, Willis, for instance) later realised that lesbianism and cultural feminism were de-radicalising feminist movement. They subsequently felt that male model was not as liberating as they thought it would be and there was something special about being a woman and it was not just masculinity denied. So, the next step was to make the feminine body analogous to the Derridean text (Gupta, 1995) for which Post-modernism was used as a post to lean against by another section of the radical feminists.

### **3.3.7 Postmodernism, Feminism, and Deconstruction Of Theory**

Postmodernism is a manner of appreciating particulars and their generalizations. Postmodernism resent any relationship between the particular and the general and argues that if the particular interact freely with the general, its uniqueness and concreteness will be appropriated by the abstractness of theory. The main target (Gupta, 1995) of the postmodernism is thus, theory - anything foundational - and this is why Marxism is their most preferred whipping boy. Dasgupta (1995) argues discontent with abstractions and generalization of theory leads Postmodernism go to other extreme of closed particularism, where any communication, in the absence of minimum generalisation, breaks down.

It is commonly acknowledged that it was disenchantment with Marxism and failure of Socialist regimes that gave postmodernism its appeal. Not unknown is the fact either that some of the early postmodernists<sup>30</sup> began their career as Marxists. The impact of postmodernism is somewhat akin<sup>31</sup> to what the New Left attempted in 1960's (Gupta, 1995). Postmodernism, first influenced literary studies, because its founder - Jacques Derrida - dealt primarily in this field.

The radical contribution to the feminist perspective that the Postmodernism offers is to our understanding of the nature of truth. Truth is undeniably notional, multi-dimensional and relative to power relationships (Poonacha, 1995) in society. Akerkar (1995) informs that Althusser's work about notion of power<sup>32</sup> has influenced his contemporary postmodernist thinkers, such as Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Kristeva, and others.

Postmodernism suggests reconstruct the 'tone' behind the speech to recover the subjectivity of the speaker and to relieve the events behind the observations. Its semantics uncover the 'meaning' behind the 'facts'. Dasgupta (ibid) argues that this is why by deconstructing the organization and logic of the feminist theories, it is possible to reconstruct much of the existential conditions of the women who subscribe to them.

Postmodernism rebels against theorisation and takes position in favour of a non-hierarchical analysis. It eliminates differences between intuition and reason, the concrete and abstract, the subjective and the objective, because it is this 'value hierarchy' that glorified 'rationality' and treated 'reason' as superior and 'emotions' as inferior attribute. The same value-hierarchy is the foundation of theory and theorisation itself is masculine and suspiciously patriarchal, for it assumes separations between the knower and the known, subject and object (Hardings, 1986:647). Postmodernism, thus rebels against masculine, ascribes feminine as its analytical category, and it is through the feminification<sup>33</sup> of the world, the postmodernist-feminists hope to attain liberation.

The intellectual attitude of postmodernism has mostly been 'realised' in contemporary radical feminist studies yet the paradox<sup>34</sup> of the same is also being continuously felt. The early radical feminist appeal for emulation of male role model as a route to liberation for women was one extreme; the total negation of male expressed in lesbianism is another; and the recent trend of treating female body as analogous to Derridean text (Gupta, 1995) is yet another extreme.

### **3.3.8 Recovery of The Feminine Principle**

The mainstream development is 'maldevelopment', because it is based on the accentuation of man's domination over the nature and women and it views both as the 'other', the passive non-self – argues Vandana Shiva (1989). The maldevelopment expropriates the activity, productivity, creativity of nature and women and turns them into

passive objects, to be used and exploited for the uncontrolled desires of **alienated** man. It is maldevelopment because; it violates the integrity of organic, interconnected and interdependent systems and is blind to the recognition of nature's harmony and action to maintain it. Maldevelopment is maldevelopment in thought and action and reductionist<sup>35</sup> in nature. This fragmented and dualist perspective violates the integrity and harmony of man in nature, the harmony between men and women and it ruptures the co-operative unity of masculine and feminine. Shiva (1989:40) presents a contrast between the Western and Indian world views of nature and woman to support her position, which is summed up below:

The Western views of nature are loaded with the duality between man and woman, person and nature. Indian cosmology views *Purush* and *Prakriti* (man and nature) a duality in unity. They are inseparable complements of one another in nature, in women, and in man. Nature is not an esoteric abstraction, but an everyday concept, organising everyday life. As an embodiment and manifestation of the feminine principle, nature is characterised by:

- creativity, activity, productivity;
- diversity in form and aspect;
- connectedness and inter-relationship of all beings, including man;
- continuity between the human and natural; and
- sanctity of life in nature.

This radically differs, from the Western<sup>36</sup> concept of nature as 'environment' or a 'resource', which views environment as separable from man as his surrounding, not his substance. Nature, according to the Western worldview is:

- inert and passive;
- uniform and mechanistic;
- separable and fragmented within itself;
- separate from man;
- inferior, to be dominated and exploited by man.

Ironically, this shift from *Prakriti* to 'natural resources', from *Mater* to 'matter' has been considered a progressive shift from superstition to rationality. Viewed from the perspective of nature, or women embedded in nature, in the production and preservation



of sustenance, this shift is regressive and violent (Mies, 1986; Shiva, 1990; Kabeer, 1994). The creators and sustainers of life are reduced to mere 'resources' in this reductionist, fragmented, anti-life model of development. Shiva, therefore, advocates a radical vision for science and development that is humanly sensitive to women and nature through recovery of what she calls the 'feminine principle'.

### 3.3.9 The Feminine Principle

The Indian cosmology, in both of its exoteric and esoteric traditions<sup>37</sup>, views the world as produced and renewed by the dialectical play of creation and destruction, cohesion and disintegration. The tension between the opposites from which motion and movement arises is depicted as the first appearance of dynamic energy, that is **Shakti**. All existence arises from this primordial energy, which is the substance of everything and pervading everything.

" **Shiva without Shakti is a corpse**" - that the heavenly transcendental power (*shiva*) has no potency unless it interacts with mundane goddess (*shakti*), which is energy, power, and bliss. *Shakti* is *Shiva's* phenomenal power (Douglas, 1997:110). *Shiva* and *Shakti*, together are thus the perfect cosmic balance: *shakti* expressing herself through **prakriti** (nature) and with everything in this world, and *shiva* dealing with everything in the next. In relationship between the sexes, this original cosmic order is understood to be the basic in Indian tradition of gender relations. Woman is the natural ruler over worldly matters and earthy forces, whereas man predominates over transcendental or heavenly issues. And, earth and heaven are co-dependent, requiring a third entity, 'space' to interact (Douglas, ibid: 108-9).

Nature, both animate and inanimate, is thus an expression of *shakti* - the feminine and creative principle of the cosmos in conjunction with the masculine principle (*purush*, the man). It is *Prakriti* who creates the world.

The quiescent aspect of Shiva is, by definition, inert.....Activity is the nature of the Nature. (Woodroffe, 1931:27).

Nature as *prakriti* is inherently active- a powerful, productive force in the dialectic of the creation, renewal, and sustenance of all life. Nature is worshipped as '*Adi-shakti*' (the

primordial power), as '*Aditi*' (the primordial vastness), the inexhaustible, and the source of abundance. According to a *Tantric* (exoteric tradition) lore:

The Goddess *Kali* is the highest expression of female spiritual power in this - *Kali Yuga* - the dark age of egoism and materialism. She is the Dark secret of the Universe, an initiatory power, the Ultimate *Shakti*. She is all women, all nature. (Douglas, *ibid*, p.110, italics mine)

Thus, every form of creation bears the sign of this dialectical unity, of diversity within a unifying principle, and this dialectical harmony between the male and female principles and between nature and man, according to Shiva (1989) is the basis of ecological thought and action in India. Therefore, Shiva advocates the **recovery of feminine principle as the route to liberation for women (and nature) the process for which combines ecology and feminism, because both are one and primarily counter-trends to a patriarchal maldevelopment.**

The feminine principle is revolutionary as it challenges the reductionist patriarchal concepts, categories and processes that have threatened human life itself. It is liberating as it provides oppositional categories that create and enlarge the spaces for maintaining and enriching all life in nature and society. The recovery of the feminine principle, Shiva argues, arise from a non-gender based ideology of liberation. She reclaims the feminine principle as a non-violent, non-gendered, and humanly inclusive alternative.

With the recovery of feminine principle position, the feminist perspective appears to have taken a radical shift from the modernist, competitive and 'catching up' orientation to a much more holistic, nurturant and non-dualistic perspective. Unlike the first generation of the feminists imploring the state to treat them on a 'footing' of 'equality' with men, Shiva is interested in deeper meanings of femininity and nature and in asserting these as far more humane and natural than the dominant 'scientific' paradigm.

Shiva's study is a post-victimology<sup>38</sup> study as well, because the voices of women from ecology movements in Third world countries are the voices of liberation and transformation which provide new categories of thought, new exploratory directions, and new insights - that women and nature are associated in creativity and in maintenance of life. With the 'feminine principle' perspective— the philosophical patriarchy is demolished!

#### 4. SHADOW, SECLUSION, NARCISSISM: FUSION IS LIBERATING

Different perspectives locate different determinants for inegalitarian gender relations. The key determinants of patriarchal gender-relations are either ecological, biological/psychology, economic, or socio-cultural. The 'ecological' determinant locates 'violence' and 'reductionism' at the root of the problem and the economic determinant locates 'exploitative production systems' (capitalism, in its present phase) as the scourge the genesis of which lies in 'estrangement of labour'. Socio-cultural determinant locates core 'gender identities' as the scourge for women subordination the genesis of which lies in gender division of labour. And, the biological and psychological determinants locate 'sexuality, emotionality, irrationality - all embodied 'femininity' as the scourge, the genesis of which, lies in biology and Freudian<sup>39</sup> psychology.

The economic determinants suggest the route to women liberation either in economic status advancement vis-à-vis men via development or in overthrowing of the dominant exploitative system based on economic structure; the socio-cultural determinants suggest this route in feminisation of development agenda; and the ecological determinant advocates for the recovery of the feminine principle.

The economic rationale of women's integration into public spheres as the equals of men (WID) and the integration into social production within a socialist system, as the 'pre-condition' for women's liberation from gender-role constraints (Marxist) - both are indicative of economic determinism in their own way. It is obvious that by 'out siding' what the economic determinants mean - is women's participation in the labour market. And, traditional Marxist perspective is 'comfortable' with this position because, to them capitalist growth is the 'essential' route to socialist transformation.

The issue is not, why women should not be 'outsided' or economically viable, the issue is why 'out siding' or 'economism' should become superior to 'in siding' or 'non-economism'? Why market and home be contraposed and presented as excluding choices? The superiority of 'rationality' over 'emotionality', 'neutrality' over 'sexuality', 'masculinity' over 'femininity' - the 'value hierarchical' (3.3.7 above) system in gender-relations has made women feel suffering from same frustration and alienation intensified in an oppressive 'masculine culture', which according to Al-Hibri (1981) and Douglas (1997) made men

suffer during ancient time in a 'feminine culture' that was perceived and felt by men as 'excluding' them from the ever-generating life cycle (4.2 below).

Estrangement of labour for women has different implications (from men). It reduces them to a non-entity, a sex object, a commodity - the blatant form, under capitalism, of which is commoditisation', commercialisation, and computerization of the fair sex. Women in Indian families are yet not so estranged from their 'sex-affective' production, therefore, their 'invisible' power within family and in intimate gender relations can still be observed - the genesis lies in relatively non-hierarchical (3.3.7 above) and feminine nature of the Indian culture.

Women's alienation from their body, reproduction, and production - all create a condition that may be explained in terms of estrangement of women's labour. The genesis of their frustration lies here as well. This frustration and alienation led them search for the 'whole personhood'. This resulted in emulation of the 'male model' as one route to their liberation and lesbianism as the other. I call the former a 'shadow' tendency and the later a 'seclusion'. These tendencies with the postmodernist incline have now transformed into 'narcissism' that is based on 'biologism' and treats female body as analogous (Gupta, *ibid*) to Derridean text.

This closed particularism permits either masochism or sadism, not liberation. Liberation lies in free and open communication between the sexes. The most natural, free and open communication between the sexes is love. Such communication could be liberating only if it enters in an atmosphere of love and harmony instead of fear, apprehensions, violence, disharmony and hatred. Simone de Beauvoir's writing about the biological differences between the sexes is not to smash the 'heterosexual matrix' instead to bring about a more meaningful communication between the sexes (Gupta, 1995; Sanghavi, 1986). The notion that Beauvoir suggests emulating male model as the way to women liberation (Shiva, 1989 and many others) is the serious most misinterpretation<sup>40</sup> of the message she conveyed through 'The Second Sex'. Neither male model is liberating nor female, liberation lies in a model that views women and men as inseparable complementing entities. This complementary model is the model of *Shiva-Shakti*, a model of duality in unity. The Postmodernist dream of mystical discourse (Dasgupta, 1995) of romantic love in which gender differences become the basis of equality is relevant here. Liberation lies

in complementarity, in female-male fusion of bodies and principles and this fusion leads to what may be termed as the stage of inclusiveness and trans-genderisation!

#### 4.1 Female: The Stronger Sex

That the exoteric and esoteric both the Indian traditions accept women as stronger sex is well expressed in the saying that '*Shiva* without *Shakti* is a corpse' (3.3.9 above). The esoteric tradition came with the Aryans, and it was Aryans who introduced 'patriarchy' after invading the land in 1700 B.C.E. (Douglas, 1997:4-5). The whole feminist discourse treating *Manusmṛiti* as the foundation of gender-relations in India needs to be revised, because the exoteric tradition is alive and strong. Douglas argues that the ancient Greek culture, on which the Western culture is largely based, was strongly masculine (Douglas, 1997:339) which assigned 'inferior' status to women. Islam also portrays women as active and powerful:

"... in Islam ...whole system is based on the assumption that the woman is a powerful and dangerous being. All sexual institutions like polygamy, repudiation, sexual segregation, etc. can be perceived as a strategy for containing her power..." (Mernissi, 1975:35, quoted in Hibri, 1981)

Al-Hibri (1981) argues that the male's perception of his exclusion from reproduction made him feel as 'inferior'; 'mortal' and cut off from the cycle of ever-regenerating life vis-à-vis female who was capable of constantly reproducing herself, and through this strength, had the key to 'immortality' which men felt they were deprived of. Male, thus, suffered serious frustration and alienation culminating in feelings of inadequacy, jealousy, and hostility towards the female. Al-Hibri argues that it was his unabashed desire and struggle for immortality in a world that seemed determined to deny it to him (3.3.5 above). Thus, the genesis of patriarchy is in men's fear rather than in strength.

Douglas (1997:339) also confirms that in ancient times, men stood in awe of women. The mysteries of childbirth and nurturing were compelling. The cosmic connections between women and nature were intuited and female power was perceived to be closely interconnected with magical control over nature. In this context, woman had the dominant role in spiritual evolution.

Female species are biologically and psychologically 'stronger sex' - this ancient Oriental belief is now reasserted by the modern science as well. The data<sup>41</sup> of modern embryology reveals that in humans femaleness is the original fundamental life forms. Douglas (1997:339) argues that contrary to the teachings of the book of Genesis in the Bible, the male evolved out of female and all creation were originally female. The latest findings of the medical science speak about not only biological distinction between the sexes, but also reassert female existence as the stronger sex vis-à-vis male. This is leading the new feminist consciousness in the USA likely to adopt the new term 'femaleist' and drop the 'feminist'. Three new publications<sup>42</sup> are being predicted as the chief manifesto of the new 'femaleist' thinking. One of these (Angier, 1999) is a sensitive exploration based on biological and physiological research, of all the ways women are turning out to be special – stronger than men in some way and weaker in some other. Germaine Greer's latest publication (Greer, 1999) is a quest for the whole 'womanhood' of its own style.

#### **4.2 The Conceptual Framework**

The **Developmentalist** believes in claiming for entitlement, bringing in power-relations and bargaining as 'mechanism' for the same. They deserve strong 'feasibility' argument in their favour. Developmental feminism is a 'claiming process' (Peattie and Rein, 1983) representing two streams; one that locates its claims within the given economic political system with making women 'indispensable' for development and the other that is exploring and making space for a feminine agenda via redefining the socio-cultural gender identities. The key-mechanism for this whole exercise is market. How far this claiming process through market as a catalyst is succeeding in liberating women? The empirical site for this testing is north Bihar (Part-III, Chapters 8, 9,10 below).

The **Movementalists** finally converge at a point where love, harmony, and free communication between the sexes become the pre-condition for women liberation and human liberation thereby. The love for human is extended to love for nature, labours, creativity - all that have been estranged from women and nature. Here, Marx, Mies, Shiva, and even Radicals converge and it appears that the movementalist category rebels against disharmony, for seeking harmony. The key mechanism for this rebelling (ad) venture is mobilization. How far mobilization as a catalyst for change in 'dis-harmonic' gender relations has succeeded in liberating women? The empirical site for this testing is central Bihar (Part-IV, Chapter 11 below).

The Movementalist refuses to have any truce with the official development efforts. Those who held 'capitalist-patriarchy' responsible for the failure of development reveal serious antipathy to development and offer an alternative vision of society based on a feminist conception of labour, involving direct and sensual interaction with nature, unmediated by technology. The Mal-developmentalists' 'recovery of the feminine principle' asserts both a 'holistic' perspective and 'inclusive' agenda of concerns based on its considerable respect for diversity - both in turn being principles of nature. The vision of a holistically transformed society, in either way, could be the 'end' that can neither be attained nor be realized in foreseeable future. And, they see short-term measures as either ameliorative, palliative or co-option of the revolutionary potentials. While agreeing with the position that liberation cannot be a 'short term' goal, it is argued here that the final vision of a society organised either according to the Marxist dream or based on the feminist principles does not preclude the need for a feasible and workable strategy.

The gender relation analysis, in this situation, offers a more distinct view of official policy making institutions. It draws attention to the rules, regulations, and practices through which institutions are constituted. It adopts a strategy of creating contradictory pressures within the development agencies with a view to create space for a feminist agenda. Kabeer (1994:67) argues that such contradictions have to be used strategically to put forward a feminist development agenda. An alternative to militant disengagement might be engagement with a view to transformation - through research, advocacy, and political strategies (Sen and Grown, 1985) that challenge the assumptions of neutrality which permeate the goals, objectives, rules, and practices of influential development agencies and help to disguise the partial nature of their vision of development.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The gender perspective strongly argues for 'bargaining' between the genders. The route to women liberation is bargaining between the genders. This implies market spirit in intimate forms of gender relationship as well. While infusion of the 'market spirit' in gender behaviour may succeed in carving out some material space for women, this process may lead to a further erosion of human values in the intimate arena of relationships. This is not going to bring about a qualitative change in gender relations.

The gender perspective recommends feminisation of institutions without a 'feminine' vision. If 'womanisation' of the institutions means feminisation (of the institution), it can further make some quantitative difference, as it may succeed in bringing in some more women in development policies and practices. Such endeavour, however, cannot lead to a change in the culture of the existing institutions, which is predominantly masculine.

Gender perspective needs to discover and define 'feminisation'. For this, the gender perspective needs to define the 'feminine'. This would necessitate a 'retreat' from the 'sociological determinism', which this perspective suffers from. The latest scientific researches are vigorously demonstrating that male and female are distinct sexes, therefore, differences in gender are not always a 'social construct'. The gender perspective has to face this challenge as well. These two weaknesses are serious limitations with this perspective, which otherwise has strong potential for carving out space for women. The gender perspective, therefore, needs to incorporate what I would prefer to call a 'women's worldview' (WWV). A women's worldview would emerge from a feminine consciousness. A feminine vision based on feminine consciousness can realistically feminise the institutions. Womanisation alone cannot lead to feminisation. This has increasingly been recognised by different feminist perspectives in India. I address this issue in chapter four below.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN INDIA: THE ROUGH WEATHER FEMINISM**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Women Liberation in India is the interest, engagement, and commitment of those who are identified as 'feminists'. Feminists, in India, at this point of time, are identified as those fighting for women's causes with or without any ideological persuasions. This broad and inclusive identification of the present day category 'feminist' deeply contrasts with the early 1970's category 'feminist'. Early feminists were seen as an exclusive category consisting of groups of educated, urbanized, upper middle class women - the bearer of the fairly western value system trying to 'enforce' its emulation in the intimate spheres of family and gender relations in Indian society. The term 'feminist', then, bore a contemptuous meaning and interpretation. The situation is radically changed since then, as now the feminists are not only those struggling for women's cause irrespective of ideological persuasions but irrespective of their gender identity as well. The women liberation movement (WLM henceforth) in India, is treated, in this chapter, as an evolutionary process beginning from a 'contemptuous' to a 'commitment', in status; from an 'exclusive' to 'inclusive', in nature; from a 'class' to 'mass', in character; from 'urban' to 'rural', in coverage; and from 'women' to 'human', in essence.

Marcuse (1970) has viewed western feminism as a product of the one-dimensional consumer society, which Mies (1986) terms as 'fair weather feminism'. WLM in India, by contrast, stems from deprivation and poverty, i.e. it is the product of a 'rough weather'. Therefore, Indian feminism may be termed as 'rough weather feminism'. This basic departure from the western setting is well reflected in practice and growth of WLM in Indian setting. While a brief systematic account of historical evolution of feminist consciousness is required to comprehend the present trends, the focus of this chapter is the main currents of present day feminist consciousness. The purpose is to locate dominant global feminist trends in Indian context, with occasional digression into history.

This chapter is broken into three sections. Section two contains a brief historical account of the evolving of the feminist consciousness, the genesis of which is traced in 19th century social protest movements and 20<sup>th</sup> century peasant movements. This covers the period until the mid-1970s. In sections three and four, I explore India as a practising site of dominant global feminist practices. This exploration leads to identify powerful indigenous feminist trends and practices. Taking strands from the preceding sections, I continue, in section five, to examine Indian feminist streams developing during 1990s and articulating 'woman' as 'power' in one way or another in this overall 'maturing' process. The chapter concludes with a brief comment over how this process is leading towards developing a 'women's worldview'.

## **2. THE GENESIS OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS**

The WLM in the form of struggle for women's right in India has a long history going back to early 19th century and more purposively, the class and mass struggles against the colonial rule during 1920s-40s of the present century (Desai, 1977). It acquired a new edge, objective and sensitivity from mid-60s, when it was realised that the formal rights granted in the constitution and subsequent policies formulated presumably to implement them were being vitiated, distorted or not permitted to be exercised by the rulers themselves pursuing a particular path of development.

### **2.1 The 19th Century Social Protest Movements**

While the cultural feminism<sup>1</sup> in Europe and USA was claiming women's equal rights in public and political spheres which was monopolised by bourgeois men (Mies, 1986), in India, it were some enlightened men who came forward to emancipate women from inhuman life conditions. The 19th century Indian feminists were, thus these men who committed their lives for women's emancipation. The 19th century social reform movement that crusaded against inhuman and anti-women social practices, kept women's emancipation agenda at the top in Bengal<sup>2</sup>, with its centre in Calcutta. The anti-caste self-respect movement in south India that challenged Hindu Brahminical order, assigned central place to 'gender equality'. The radical mass movement infused with gender consciousness that posed threat to the establishment as a whole, demolished those sites of oppression where 'dignity' of women were ravaged in Maharashtra.

The sharp contrasting socio-economic situation characterized by overall degenerating condition of common people in general, and women in particular, at the one end and newly evolving ideas and philosophy among a small but powerful elite group at the centre of all kinds of power at the other – constituted the dominant social setting during 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial rule in India – which led to emanate two powerful streams of social protest movements: the Reformist and the Radical.

### 2.1.1 The Reformist Crusade Against Gender Cruelties

A small group of enlightened intellectual crusaders<sup>3</sup> from the affluent segment of indigenous society emerged first to launch organised social protest against the medieval obscurantism, religious bigotry, superstitions and other inhuman practices stifling the society. **Atmiya Sabha** - the organisation, which initially led this movement in Bengal fought against the anti-women social practices such as, *sati*, child marriage, prevention of widow remarriage, dowry system, etc. and claimed for property rights for women. **Brahma Samaj** was another reformist organisation, which took up legal reform work through lobbying with the government. These early reformer's thoughts were influenced by western values such as, personal liberty and individual development. They valued human values combined with rationality and with all this the question of education, freedom, social and human rights for women stirred their mind.

The liberal reforms had to face tough resistance<sup>4</sup> from both the Revivalists and the Reactionaries. The 'revivalists' were committed to evolving of an Indian model of womanhood based on Vedic scriptures, yet they extended 'qualified'<sup>5</sup> support to the liberal's work and opposed the 'western emulation', which in their view 'denigrated' the values of the Indian social system. The 'reactionaries', however, blindly opposed all reforms as they were committed to the conservative social values.

Revivalism later grew within **Brahma Samaj** - the strongest reformist organization with widest network - ultimately leading to splits by the century-end. The revivalist trend became very strong; it equated nationalism with Hindu culture and philosophy; and the slogan of nationalism as synonyms to revivalism caught the popular mind - weakening the liberal trend more or less across the country at the threshold of the 20th century.

### 2.1.2 The Radical Anti-caste Self-respect Movement

In south India, it was the inner-contradiction of the social system based on the conservative values of the Hindu religion, which provided material conditions to emerge the radical Anti-caste Self-respect movement during mid-19<sup>th</sup> century against the Brahminical order<sup>6</sup> in Maharashtra and TamilNadu. Ambedkar carried on the tradition during 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lederle, 1976). These radical social protest movements located the genesis of caste and women oppression both in Hindu religion and focussed 'human equality' of which 'gender-equality' was integral part.

Gender equality' was the foundation of the *Satyashodhak Samaj*, the organisation that led this movement in Maharashtra. Phule refused to use the language carrying the sense of gender-inequality and introduced gender-neutral language. Later, Pariyars in Tamilnadu rejected the *mangalsutra*<sup>7</sup>, advocated for unisex dress for men and women, suggested male names for girls and asked men to share household work and child care responsibility with women. Both these movements denounced Brahmin priests and traditional rituals for marriage and devised new gender-equality based forms of marriage (Geetha, 1998). The gender components of the anti-caste movement were of a kind that could be equated with the radical feminism of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.2 The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Feminism: Uneasy Alliance with Nationalism

The evolving of an autonomous movement with a liberal-feminist agenda<sup>8</sup> could be traced from 1917 with claiming for women enfranchise, the first but major political right for Indian women. It took organised shape with the formation of the All India Women's Conference (the AIWC henceforth) - as a local extension to the Euro-centric liberal-feminism - by the leading 'ladies' of the Indian National Congress<sup>9</sup> (INC henceforth).

The AIWC played crucial role in creating a favourable climate for new social legislations (Desai, 1981) such as Sharda Act (1929) forbidding child marriage, the Dissolution of the Muslim Marriage Act (1939), the Bill for the Better Supervision of Orphanages, Widow Rescue Homes, and Marriage Bureaus (1940). The AIWC created effective pressure for getting these legislations enacted.

The AIWC was initially reluctant to extend political co-operation to the nationalist movement. The reluctant and indifferent attitude of the colonial rule towards feminist issues also disenchanted AIWC leadership. They seriously felt that self-rule alone could guarantee them their right. Therefore, they need to respond to the growing demand of the nationalist movement. Nationalism was perceived as pre-condition for feminism.

With this position the AIWC, subsequently, joined ***Namak Satyagraha***<sup>10</sup> in April 1930. The first contradiction between the nationalism and the feminism emerged at this occasion with the Congress leadership's attempt to exclude women in direct action. This was strongly protested by the AIWC, which posited that the division of sexes in a non-violent campaign was unnatural, and against the awakened consciousness of modern women (Sharma, 1981). The congress had to withdraw its proposal. From 1930s, the AIWC began talking in terms of equality between the sexes as a necessary condition for social development (Desai, 1981). The serious concern of the AIWC for equal rights vis-à-vis men and opting out for a clear feminist position in case of conflicts over political issues sharpened this contradiction. The 1930s and 1940s were the decades of an uneasy alliance between the feminism and the nationalism. The demand for complete reform of Hindu Personal Law and campaign for the Hindu Code Bill in 1943-44 by the AIWC heightened (Forbes, 1981) the contradictions between the AIWC and the INC leadership.

### 2.3 The Democratic Women's Movement

The global political situation changed fast with the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Its immediate consequence in India was the repressive<sup>11</sup> actions initiated by the colonial rule against the communists and other left forces. In 1942, the 'quit India' movement and 'anti-fascist' movement both went side by side as a part of global fight against the fascist threats.

The Communist Party of India (CPI henceforth) formed nationwide democratic women's organizations for mobilizing women against the fascist threats. The ***Mahila Atma-Raksha Samiti*** (MARS) as a part of this campaign was formed in Bengal in 1943 with Ela Reid<sup>12</sup> - a journalist as its first secretary. MARS received support from women's organizations of the INC, the Muslim League, and the Hindu Mahasabha alike as well as from the AIWC. It is interesting that a women organisation with such a secular character was formed for

global anti-fascist struggle; women solidarity breaking ideological bars and transcending communal identities attached with the political parties espoused nationalism as its primary concern and feminism was once again pushed aside.

The feminist agenda of MARS was one of a liberal-democratic nature, such as securing social and legal rights for women. It worked for famine victims (Mitra, 1998) and extended support to the class struggles of workers and peasants, which considerably contributed to its base. Ela Reid participated in International Women's Conference<sup>13</sup> in Paris in 1945 as MARS representative (Mukherjee 1989). MARS was later affiliated to Women International Democratic Federation (WIDF) – a socialist international forum for women.

## 2.4 The Radical Rural Mass Movement

The establishing of private property and introducing of market in land through 'permanent settlement' in 1793 and development of dependent and uneven nature of capitalism led to unprecedented structural changes ((Chaudhary, 1980) in urban and rural societies. These material conditions led peasants and workers to rise in protest. While rural poor stood in protest in agriculture, plantation, and mining sectors in Bengal and Bombay, textile industry became the bastion of working class protest. These protest movements developed into two powerful streams of mass struggle against the colonial rule and their local collaborators: the working class and the rural mass streams of struggle.

The working class movement, i.e., the trade union politics subsumed women's issues remaining predominantly masculine<sup>14</sup> in nature. The rural mass struggle, however, espoused feminist consciousness allowing it to grow and develop in tune with the class-consciousness. A series of powerful peasant revolts<sup>15</sup> took place in the 1940s - important among those were: Telangana (1945-50) in Andhra Pradesh, Warli (1945-47) in Maharashtra, Tebhaga (1944-45) in Bengal, and Santhal (1938-42) *Bataidari* Struggles in Bihar. The Kisan Sabha, the peasant organisation of the CPI, led first three of these.

In Warli, women fought back class exploitation along with gender oppression; acted militant at par with men in the struggle against *lagnagadi*<sup>16</sup> system and low wage. Godavari Parulekar (1975) - one of the leaders of the Warli revolt - has recorded that after the *lagnagadis* (bonded labourer) were liberated, the farm-houses - the sites of sexual exploitation and physical oppression - were the first object to be demolished,

because its destruction symbolized not only the destruction of landlord's authority but more so a confirmation of self-respect and dignity for the tribal (women, in particular).

In the course of Tebhaga and Telangana peasant struggles women began questioning male dominance both inside home and within the party (Sundarayya, 1972). They became aware of their discrimination vis-à-vis men in the political sphere, and began questioning as why they were not made formal members of the Kisan Sabha or why they were not given arms to fight.

The overall political consciousness among women got transformed into gender consciousness, which resulted in challenging male dominance in the domestic sphere. Women comrades of Tebhaga movement (Chakraborty, 1980) also questioned men's right to beat women. What they were spontaneously doing was to bring the gender consciousness prevail upon the class-consciousness.

The experiences<sup>17</sup> of women comrades of Telangana (Irina Sen, 1989) further reveal an enormous sense of personal liberation in them with coming out into public political action. It was as if they had stepped out of the boundaries that defined their space in the private, family world. All this marked a deep sense and enormous advance in their personal liberation and political consciousness. The feminist reclamation of *Santhal* and other struggles in Bihar is yet to begin.

## **2.5 Transfer of Power, Co-option, and Receding Feminist Consciousness**

The feminist consciousness that grew in 1930s and found powerful expression throughout 1940s receded after the transfer of power for different reasons, such as:

- With the transfer of power, nationalism - the 'precondition' to feminism was achieved and the 'liberal feminism' rested all the hopes with the own rule.
- The 'democratic feminist stream' suffered partition by the borders in Bengal and Punjab with the partition of the country. MARS suffered severest blow, first by partition and later by cooption, finally reducing it to the status of an affiliate organisation of the CPI and later of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) – CPI (M) as well in 1970.

- The 'mass struggle stream' suffered a setback<sup>18</sup> leaving the poor cadres disappointed from its leadership, and the poor too could not escape the euphoria that the transfer of power brought in.

The 'euphoria' carried lots of expectations from the self-rule. With their mounting aspirations, the common people were hardly able to realise that it were just ruling hands that had changed and not the system as a whole which had gone through any transformation<sup>19</sup>. It was hardly recognised by the mainstream political leadership either, that difference between the power-transfer and independence was a qualitative difference between the partial liberation and total liberation.

The CPI tried to reincarnate MARS, in the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW henceforth) in 1954, affiliated to the WIDF. The AIWC and Congress led women organizations sided with the Congress and confined their agenda to constructive social work. This stream later pursued the path of what could be termed as the Indian model of 'Official feminism' (3 below). The CPI (M) formed the *Shramik Mahila Sangathana* (Working Women's Association) in 1971 and The All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) in 1981.

## 2.6 Feminist Consciousness Co-opted in Electoral Space

The co-option of pre-1947 feminist consciousness by electoral politics hardly helped women carve out a fair space in electoral political arena of empowerment (Bambawale, 1989). This is evident from a declining graph<sup>20</sup> of women's participation in parliamentary politics between 1952-99. The last 50 years of competitive Indian politics with a wide ideological spectrum of extreme right to the extreme left has failed to give more than a token representation to women in the highest political decision making bodies. The proportion of women elected for the parliament and state legislatures on an average in each of the last 12 *Lok Sabhas* (the lower house of the Parliament) had only 30 women Parliamentarians, a figure below 6 percent. This figure for the *Rajya Sabha* (the upper house of the Parliament) was 9 percent and for the state assemblies just 4 percent.

Bihar recorded the highest female representation with 9.4 percent in 1957 assembly elections followed by 7.9 percent between 1960-65. The average figure for the last 50



years of electoral representation is 4.3 percent, little bit higher than the national average of 4 percent (Fact-File, 1952-97). It is interesting to note that Haryana and Madhya Pradesh with a poor female literacy record have shown a better than average female representation with 6.2 and 5.1 percent respectively. While Madhya Pradesh, in 1957 crossed 10 percent (with 10.8 percent) barrier in any state assembly, Bihar followed Madhya Pradesh same year by 9.4 percent. Some of the reasons for lower representation of women are:

- The culture of discouraging young leadership emerged in electoral politics. This discouraged women activists (much more than men).
- The increasing 'criminalisation'<sup>21</sup> of politics after mid-sixties severely constrained women.
- The worst representation of women even in *panchayats* – the smallest and local unit of self-governance - is not due to their 'domesticity' but 'criminalisation' of politics.
- Tendency to induct women as 'compassionate case'<sup>22</sup> developed in electoral politics from seventies.

The Kerala<sup>23</sup> experience offers two other reasons for marked retrogression in enterprising women's participation in *panchayat* after 1970: the next generations of the erstwhile freedom fighter families have become more security-conscious and have sought shelter in secure jobs and professions; and, a new generation leadership who have promoted a process of professionalisation of politics has taken control of the scene (Mathew, 1997).

## 2.7 Development and Disillusion

The euphoria was over and optimism frustrated within two decades of the transfer of power with a bitter realization that the formal rights granted to poor and women<sup>24</sup> in the constitution and subsequent policies formulated to implement them were vitiated, distorted and not permitted to be exercised by the rulers themselves. The law as a major instrument and potentially emancipatory force of social change and gender-justice proved to be a practical failure. The inherent anti-poor and masculine-patriarchal bias in

development was becoming evident and the inegalitarian nature of development planning had started revealing its inability to expand the limited opportunities available to the vast bulk of the poor, the overwhelming majority of whom were women. The three basic components of the planning strategy: land reforms, co-operative farming and community development in the fifties and sixties were ridden with class, caste and gender bias (Majumdar, 1997; Dasgupta, 1987). The overall frustration and disillusionment of the poor and women from the rulers and 'development' itself got manifested in a series of social and agrarian movements in different parts of the country since mid-sixties onwards.

The Maoist insurgency – known as the *Naxalbari* upsurge or Naxalite movement in common parlance in the late-sixties was the most powerful revolt against this disillusionment that engulfed the vast rural areas across the country with Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh as its nerve centres. It was a revival of the 1940's militant spirit of the poor peasants in a more vibrant and vivid form. These Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries assumed that if different oppressed groups get organised, though representing their separate identity, but finally forging unity to fight back the system as a whole, the dream of overall social transformation could be realised within a decade. With this assumption, the decade of the seventies was proclaimed as the 'decade of liberation'. The radical Marxist-feminist stream of women liberation emerged out of this revolutionary trend of mass movement (Chapters - 5 and 11 below).

The feminist consciousness simultaneously acquired a new edge and sensitivity from mid-sixties onwards and began questioning the postulates of official, dominant socio-cultural and economic norms, which provided the basic gestalt (Desai, 1985) of the socio-economic and politico-cultural order. The feminist consciousness sparked off through anti-price rise movement in 1973-4 under the leadership of the CPI (M) led Working Women's Association in (WWA) Maharashtra. The WWA received massive support from the women's organisations of the socialists, the congress and the middle-class housewives from urban areas in western India.

These late-60s and early-70s protest movements had to suffer state repression, in general. The ML movement had to face the severest<sup>25</sup> repression. This was the time when the most democratic JP movement of 1974 too had to suffer repression and go underground after the emergency was clamped in 1975. Though the Naxalite dream of transforming the decade of seventies into the decade of 'liberation' could not be realised,

this decade proved to be a decade of significant change in Indian politics as the 1977 elections had radically altered the whole political mosaic. The change in political mosaic means change in the face of people's representation in Indian democracy. The traditional ruling classes and bi-polar or tri-polar political culture was pushed back; it was the turn of the socially and politically 'middle' strata<sup>26</sup> of the society to ascend to power with a multi-polar political culture.

The autonomous women's groups sprang up after the emergency was lifted in 1977. The Congress party along with its patriarch leader Indira Gandhi miserably lost the elections and the Janata party came to power at the centre as well as in many states. The atmosphere of intense theoretical discussions over issues related to exploitation and oppression of unprivileged sections of the society including women was resumed. Numerous women's groups, collectives, and organisations emerged and took up the issues like women oppression, domestic violence and sexual harassment. They also initiated the process of overall conscientisation of women. Voices against the demeaning and discriminatory patriarchal personal laws were raised and fundamentalist assaults over women's rights were challenged. Environmental and ecological issues were taken up and crusades against the consumerism in media - mainly, advertising and film industries were launched. All these efforts later diversified via different feminist trends, which I call 'feminism from below'.

Parallel to the 'feminism from below' emanated the 'feminism from above', which began claiming for women's stake in development. While the thrust of the 'feminism from above', then, was to 'add' the 'women's component' to the existing development institutions, the agenda of the 'feminism from below' was a radical transformation of the patriarchal society. The former represents the 'Developmentalist' category and the latter the Movementalist in India.

### **3. THE DEVELOPMENTALIST: EVOLVING OF OFFICIAL FEMINISM**

The official feminism grew within the national bureaucracy and development organisations with engaging itself in 'adding' women's component to all welfarist and development activities diverting some financial and organisational resources towards furthering of the women's cause, thereby. This acted as the 'pressure' to create space for women in development. The Central Social Welfare Board established in 1953 had

already co-opted many liberal-feminists. After the passage of the Hindu Code Bill –1955, the AIWC, the pre-1947 days vanguard of demanding equal rights for women - lost its vigour and had since been concerned mainly with provisioning of services for them like hostels, mobile medical facilities, aid centres etc. (Desai, 1981). The AIWC is still engaged in networking with the ruling classes and depend on the state and 'welfarist' individual(s) and group(s) for grants.

The publication of 'Towards Equality'<sup>27</sup> in 1974 provided database for a macro-perspective regarding the general situation of women in India and exposed the neglect of women in overall development process at the national plane. The Indian model of WID perspective began evolving in tune with the IDB, of course, with localisation effects.

The 'International Women's Decade' acted as a catalyst to highlight and stimulate all aspects of growing awakening among women, the organisational experiments, theoretical discourses and practical struggles which were evolving during late-sixties and early-seventies. The UN's World Plan of Action -1975 put forth various suggestions for the recruitment, nomination and promotion of women in different government departments, public bodies, trade unions, and pressure groups. India adopted a National Plan of Action -1976 as an extension to this and set up the Women's Welfare and Development Bureau same year to act as a nodal agency within the government to coordinate policies and programs and initiate measures for women's development<sup>28</sup>.

The Nairobi Declaration -1985 stressed that for the equality to become a reality for women, the sharing of power on equal terms with men must have to be a major strategy. And, the Beijing Platform of Action -1995 emphasized the importance of government and non-government organisations in educating women to exercise their civil, political and social rights, and stated that in this process of consciousness raising, efforts need to be made to fix definite time-bound targets.

The implication of all these international initiatives for Indian model of official feminism has been remarkable. The cumulative effect of these initiative and acting of the official feminists as a powerful pressure group within the government culminated into the formulation of the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000 AD). With this plan the focus of the 'official feminism' shifted to women integration in development as producers and participants, not as the clients of welfare. The Plan acknowledged gender-

bias in all areas of national life and viewed women as the emerging critical factor in development. The Plan, evaluating the impact of development on women accepts the failure of the development measures and advocates an alternative development strategy in following words:

A parallel sub-stream of women's development even if possible, will only perpetuate discrimination and subordination. An alternative strategy of national development which will provide not just some additional space for women, but create a democratic, egalitarian, cooperative social structure has to be defined and tried.....the goal of holistic human development must not be at the expense of one another and the ascent to equality must be collective (Haxar, 1988).

Margaret Alva<sup>29</sup> (1997) stated that the scattered, piece-meal or curative approach to the advancement of women, unrelated to policies and strategies for economic development was now replaced by an integrated participatory approach, related to their needs, aspirations and choices, emphasising the holistic approach for bringing them into the mainstream of national development programmes by 2000 AD, for which certain special measures for women as transitory support were recommended. As a follow up action, while some of the Indian states formulated their own policies for women development, the union government was formulating<sup>30</sup> a national policy for women.

The Plan sought to give a new thrust and responsiveness to all-level development programmes, which could be achieved by creating 'women development bureaucracy' right from the top to the bottom level in every state, strangely enough without seeking for increased investment or resources for the same. The Plan recommended to utilise political empowerment via women's reservation<sup>31</sup> from parliament to *panchayats* and for this emphasis is laid on their training aimed at enabling them not only protect and promote their interests but also direct development processes to promote community development. The Plan envisaged a widespread participation of voluntary actions in women development and conceded that NGOs were closer to the people than the rigid bureaucracy.

Government has felt that it cannot assume the entire responsibility of development... A meaningful partnership with the voluntary sector has thus been an avowed goal and essential variable in the government's attempts in integrating women in development... (The NPPW 1988-2000 AD, quoted in Haxar, 1988).

The development of Indian 'official feminism' from a 'liberal-feminist' position to a 'gender perspective' position - the latter, in more evolved form with political empowerment through

reservation and provision for a full-fledged WDB is impressive indeed, in terms of words and plans. How about the ground reality? Here are some reflections:

- It is strange that Plan calls for a greater role of women's groups in development activities, yet the government has not bothered to associate any of these groups in the process of preparation<sup>32</sup> of this plan.
- The apex body like the National Committee on Women - headed by the Prime Minister to advise the central and the state governments on the policy, legislative and administrative measures concerning women development - has 29 members, yet none of them are included from women's groups or organisations.

The government's shift of its responsibility to people via voluntary sector involvement requires a clear understanding of what this State-NGO cooperation does mean? If NGOs are close to people, why then a powerful bureaucracy that not only inhibits people's access but gobbles up development fund, is needed? If the state recognises that NGOs are closer to people, the people's organisations are closest to people. Then, why is there 'untouchable' treatment with them? These reflections raise serious doubts about the intent and purposes of official feminism in India.

#### **4. THE MOVEMENTALIST: FEMINISM FROM BELOW**

The Socialists and the Radicals dominated the initial phases of WLM in India. The socialists combined feminist issues with common issues and worked with the left and radical mass organisations with their prime identity as 'autonomous' feminist groups. With this strategy they occupied a 'feminist space' within mass movement. The Radicals, by contrast, felt that working with the mass organisations would subsume their identity. The socialist-feminists significantly developed theoretical understanding on subordination of women in family, gender divisions and its exploitative effect on women, analysis of housework and its implications for capitalism, patriarchal-sexual norms and women's oppression.

#### 4.1 The Socialist-Feminist Trends

Socialists formed the first two autonomous feminist groups in 1974: the Progressive Organisation of Women (POW) in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh) and the League of Women Soldiers (LWS) in Aurangabad (Maharashtra), who carried two different trends. The POW offered a traditional Marxist analysis of women's oppression and identified class and gender both as the locus for struggle – revealing an inclination towards developing a Marxist-feminist synthesis. Their popular agenda consisted of anti-dowry campaigns, protests against eve teasing, obscenity, price rise and fighting back the hardships the slum-dweller women were facing.

The LWS carved out its 'space' in the anti-caste movement taking strands from its 20th century revival by Ambedkar in Maharashtra and located the genesis of women oppression in Hindu religion and attacked the *Manusmriti*<sup>33</sup>. They assumed that upper-caste women were more constrained than their lower caste counterparts, because Hinduism was strictly practised<sup>34</sup> among the upper caste.

#### 4.2 The Socialist-feminists within 'Total Revolution'

The vision of the 'total revolution' incorporated revolutionary change in gender relations. The JP movement<sup>35</sup> (of the mid-seventies) launched a powerful land redistribution movement in Bihar through the *Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini* (*Vahini* hereafter) against the *Mahant* (the religious trustee) of Bodh Gaya. The 'women question' was forcefully raised during this mass struggle in 1979 by a few women volunteers of the *Vahini* (army) and it led the *Vahini* on to feminism (Sinha, 1991). They looked into the lives of women in a *Kamiya*<sup>36</sup> (bonded labourer) family. That a *Kamiya* was a servant of his master, yet the lord of his wife.

Protests against liquor-consumption, wife-beating and other such anti-women practices finally culminated into the radical demand for land-rights for *Kamiya* women. The *Vahini* activists made 'land to women' the key issue. The influence of radical feminism was very much present, because volunteers belonged to the educated urban middle class and their level of feminist consciousness was high. The Bodh Gaya struggle, argues Kelkar and Gala (1990), shows clearly how feminist perspectives helped to direct the struggles in terms of general issues and simultaneously obtain specific measures for women. In

this struggle for land rights feminist perspectives not only helped to question the male leadership's ideology, but also helped in reconstructing the organisation of the movement and its demand. If its singular history was an acceptance of the joint husband and wife land title deeds, its efforts to constantly question the various manifestations of gender relationships in production relations as well as in the family helped in furthering the space available to women.

#### 4.3 The Radicals and the Body-politics

The radical movement by the Indian feminists following the Western feminist organisational principles started with small autonomous women's groups or centres formed in between late 70s and early 80s in the big cities, either around particular issues or, more generally, as points where women could meet, speak out, discuss their problems. The most known of them were: *Stri Sangharsh* (now dissolved) and *Saheli* (Delhi); *Stri Mukti Sangathana*, Forum Against Oppression of Women and Women's Centres (Bombay), *Stri Shakti Sangathana* (Hyderabad), *Vimochana* (Banglore), and Women's Centre (Calcutta). Around the same time, the first feminist magazine *Manushi* began to be published by a women's collective in Delhi.

Initially, these feminist groups had regional identity such as, Bombay group, Delhi group and so on. By 1979-80, they started campaigns in different parts of the country against dowry-murders, custodial rapes, on the one hand, and making union of women workers in informal sector, on the other. Violence and economic exploitation were two main issues. It was the feminists who took cognisance of dowry deaths as 'murders', until then treated as suicide or accidents in police records. The radical feminist movement developed around such series of events.

Dowry murders<sup>37</sup> and custodial rapes<sup>38</sup> became public issues and caught the attention of people and media. The private sphere of the family was held to be the major site for the women's oppression. The radical groups began exposing the private affair of the family and explained how these issues were public and social. The radicals also began feeling that the agitations and campaigns bore limited fruits until accompanied by the structures to aid and support suffering women. With this objective, women's centres were established to provide with a mixture of legal aid, health care and counselling. Some of them had employment provisions as well.



These women-exclusive support systems, instead of creating sympathy for the victims, were, instead perceived as 'intruding' into the intimate private affairs and generated a hostile atmosphere for the feminists both in public and in private. They had to face serious antipathy from irate families, in person, as well as via police and the courts.

The 'aid for development' activities that began to be poured into the feminist movement with provisioning centres, created to help women, raised competition, cynicism and bitterness. The bureaucratism that complements the development of organisational identities exposed its worst face in joint action forums. As a consequence to all this, autonomous groups lost much of their credibility and space they earlier occupied on the premise that they were different from party political women's organisations. The shift-away of autonomous organisations from agitational activities after mid- 80's gave way the party-affiliate women's organizations to move into the same. This made them lose their media support as well. A polarised<sup>39</sup> view of the movement also led the radical feminists get marginalized.

The feminists had to suffer serious blow from fundamentalists during mid-80's, who felt threatened by its secular character that could not only have affected their communal politics but their revivalist agenda as well. The *Shah Bano*<sup>40</sup> and the *Rupkunwar*<sup>41</sup> cases led to serious encounter between them. The feminist campaign against the Shah Bano Muslim Bill -1986 exposed contradictions within the feminist movement, as well as the marginalization of the feminist groups by the traditional left. This campaign was spearheaded by the CPI-M, which organised a 'left and democratic' Muslim opposition to the Bill instead of allying with the feminists who had raised a demand for the Uniform Civil Code. This occasion, thus, could not be fully utilised as a site for feminist struggle.

The another feminist site for struggle was created again in 1987, when the campaign against the *Rupkunwar Sati* case was used as a site of conflict between the communalism and the feminism. This time, the feminists had to wrestle with the Hindu fundamentalists. The feminists, succeeded in getting another<sup>42</sup> Bill passed against *Sati*. The culprits, however, escaped punishment.

The co-option of the feminist rhetoric along with the feminists by the state went apace in 1980s. Empowerment of women became a slogan articulated in government documents.

The growing statism and NGO-isation (Menon, 1997) of the women's movement in the last decade, in particular, has been noted within the movement itself, often leading to acrimonious debates on the issues of funding. While the danger of co-option is taken as usual, Menon argues that greater danger is the compulsion of taking up and 'successfully' completing specific projects that deviates the thinking process itself over what actually constitutes feminism. Thus, the autonomous women's groups, which began to create space outside the orthodoxies of the party-affiliate women wings, are not 'autonomous' of the compulsions of getting and retaining funding.

#### 4.4 The Radical Marxist-Feminists

Who is a Naxalite? A person who fights back sexploitation from his last drop of blood! This is a common identity of a Naxalite in the countryside of those parts in India where these revolutionary left forces are present. The 'radical Marxist-feminist'<sup>43</sup> stream emanated from this tradition of radical left movement (2.4 above) during eighties. This was in sharp contrast to the traditional left movement, which has general thrust over building of a women's movement, in order to, strengthen the struggle for establishing a people's democratic state - a tendency that Omvedt (1975) terms as 'liquidationist'. Naxalism was a 'revival' of the heightened class and gender consciousness of Tebhaga, Warli and Telangana phase of militant mass movement in late-1960s in a more militant form, the gender consciousness component of which culminated into the formation of their separate women's organisations by late 1980s (Chapter- 11 below).

The radical Marxist-feminist movement can be defined as developing self-consciousness of women as an oppressed section of the society and the role of the Naxalite movement in making them 'realise' this, is impressive. Since its inception, the Naxalite movement felt that unless the poor were not made aware of their *izzat* (self-respect) they would not raise in protest against their overall exploitation. The issue of *izzat* encapsulated the right to life with all sense of human respect. The poor and outcaste downtrodden were not treated as 'human' before. Their women were not treated as 'human' either. The worst form of gender exploitation was sexploitation. The question of women's dignity, i.e. *izzat* was attached with the question of men's dignity as well, and in turn with the dignity of the whole society of which the poor and outcaste downtrodden were a part. The Naxalite movement, therefore, assigned the issue of sexploitation (of lower caste and *harijan* women) by the upper (and later by the middle) caste social groups central place, around

which mass movement sparked off, at many occasions in Bihar, Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. It was not an accident that during the early phase of Naxalite upsurge, the frequency of mass movement sparked off around the issue of rape or molestation of some lower caste women was quite high. The Naxalite movement provides the best analytical site for locating the process of transformation of class-consciousness into gender consciousness.

The radical Marxist-feminists have incorporated patriarchy into their analysis; they practically assign class and gender both equal importances, though the theoretical position held by all the Naxalite organisations is in favour of treating class as the prime contradiction. Yet, the localisation effect plays significant in pursuing strategy for struggle and gender oppression is fought back most militantly. Though working under the umbrella of the main party – being treated as the parent organisation – the women's organisation enjoys autonomy in dealing with gender questions. This leads to occasional conflicts between the Marxism (here Naxalism) and the feminism, yet a democratic resolution may be expected in view of a flexible attitude. It is often the 'concrete situation', which proves to be decisive. The thrust is more over 'practice' rather than polemics<sup>44</sup>.

#### **4.5 SEWA: The Trade Union Feminism**

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) - a Gandhian-socialist movement for '*doosari azadi*' (second freedom) as Ela Bhatta<sup>45</sup> calls it, started organising poor, illiterate, semi-literate, but economically active women in 1972 assuming that poor women were capable of playing a leading role in the women's movement. This assumption was based on firm belief of Gandhi, in women's natural capacity of leadership. Bhatta argues that what India achieved in 1947 was the first freedom, the political power, the second freedom - the economic power - was yet to be achieved and SEWA was a humble route to this second freedom. Women, as women, wanted voice and visibility, opportunities to learn and act; as poor, wanted to come out of day-to-day survival; and as workers in self-employed sector, wanted to be the part of the labour movement. This was not possible without access to and ownership of economic resources obtained by them.

Bhatta argues that above 80 percent of the working population is engaged in the informal sectors and they are just outside any labour movement, and overwhelming populace of women workers is engaged in rural informal sectors. The trade union movement in India

is largely masculinised and SEWA offers an alternative vision and version for a feminine trade union activity.

SEWA began with organising women vendors in 1972, followed by self-employed poor women workers in cities, and created alternative credit support structure for them. Its expansion over next two decades led to the capital formation and asset creation by creating a Co-operative Bank as an alternative institution with a web of about 100 small cooperatives and 1,000 producer groups at the grassroots as a broad base. SEWA movement has created new concepts and categories. Bhatta argues that a businesswoman is different from a businessman; 'feminist governance' is different from a 'gender-sensitised' bureaucracy (Chapter - 12:4.2 below).

#### **4.6 The Constraints, Conflicts, Inner-Conflicts**

The feminist movement by late eighties underwent a simultaneous process of expansion and fragmentation. The common belief that feminism was based on the need for personal solidarity led to its expansion. The inner-conflicts, by contrast, led to its fragmentation as a movement. The autonomous groups and the radical feminists, in person, had to face toughest resistance in 1980s over 'violence and body politics'. During campaigns against rape it was felt that bringing the trauma of rape victims in public proved to be not less painful than the act itself perpetrated on them. The involvement of feminists in private lives of people via aid and support centres was disapproved and at times, even threatened by people and the state both. The efforts of making 'private' issues public and 'personal' issues political could not sustain.

The campaigns against the (mis) use of sex-determination and pre-selection technique for femicide was confused with women's right to free, safe and legal abortions and had to face multi-corner protests (Shukla 1987). While doctors extended the argument of helping women out of their immediate predicament, the population planners argued that feminists were thwarting population growth check process carried out via these techniques. Some 'enlightened' thinkers<sup>46</sup> extending the supply-demand economic theory to this issue supported femicide as a good instrument for balancing the supply and demand of women in society and argued that high demand will enhance their status (Mies, 1986).

While feminists received strength-wise cooperation during campaigns against rape, dowry murders etc. via coordinating their activities with the left parties, they also discovered that it constrained them strategically, intellectually and morally.

The theoretical as well as strategic conflicts severely affected feminist solidarity in the late eighties. The inter-relationships within feminist groups - dominated by the socialists and the communists - emerged as another critical issue. For instance, SEWA was 'reformist' for those who were radicals within the feminist groups. SEWA, in response, maintained reservations with the feminists. The 'hybrid' socialist-feminists critiqued SEWA for being insensitive to imposed identity of women as housewives and argued that articulating women as a 'worker' was not possible without being sensitive to their biology (Gandhi and Shah, 1991). That the activities like SEWA deserve appreciation in India, a country with vast informal economies is the most valid and workable justification for its existence - was blatantly ignored.

Since many of the feminists were the members of one or another communist currents, they did not wish to expose their constituencies to the struggle for power, which was evident in the feminist movement. Their efforts in the 80s, to establish a relationship of workplace politics with their parent organisations, could not succeed and remained reduced to a neighbourhood relationship.

The party-affiliate women's organisations openly displayed sectarianism. While the left attacked radical groups, the socialists denounced the left as the 'leaders' of the feminist movement. The radicals, opted for blatant 'individualism' and devoted much time and energy to establish their separate identities and emphasis on identity reflected that individualism was merely a mask for egotism (Kumar, 1989).

The common criticism raised against the radicals were remarkably similar to those advanced against the liberal social reformers in the 19th century: that they were westernised, upper class and urbanised and therefore unsympathetic to and ignorant of traditional Indian society. The fundamentalists, extending this argument posited that the 'modern' views of the feminists were drawn from western capitalist society and were thus incapable of appreciating the nobility of traditional Hindu philosophies. Ironically, these views were expressed at a time, while feminists were exploring traditional contexts in

search of an Indian model of feminism, while they were looking into women's strength and reclaiming *Telangana* and *Chipko* movements (4.7 below).

The communal forces, however, had to face organised feminist resistance in 1992 at the National Women's Convention organised on 29-30 August, at Patna. It was the first ever women's response to the rightist offensive while all feminist streams and trends converged against the communal threats. Amidst these constraints the feminist movement succeeded in making women's issues widely recognised and making women an important constituency claiming for their rights in such a way that between late 70s and early 80s the traditional leftists and the rightists both felt threatened and began galvanising<sup>47</sup> their affiliate women's organisations as a mark to assigning importance to women questions.

The feminists generated a sense of competitiveness within the party-politics and they acted as catalyst, simultaneously, in evolution of different indigenous feminist trends culminating into a more holistic and diverse models of Indian feminism. This process began with the 'reclamation' of the past strength of Indian women, which may aptly be termed as the post-victimology phase of Indian feminist movement. If 1980s was a period of decline for autonomous women's group based movement, it was a beginning of the post-victimology phase as well.

#### **4.7 Reclamation of Past Strength: Beginning of Post-Victimology**

The feminists, since late eighties shifted their outlook from 'victim' to 'strength' model of Indian woman; began rediscovering the traditional sources of women's strength; and reappropriating of the traditionally accepted women's space. The feminist scrutiny of the past reassessed and redefined historical examples of women resistance and the role they played in movements aimed at social transformation. They reclaimed *Chipko* and *Telangana* movements, which predated the contemporary feminist movement. The reclamation of women's strength in culture, literature, media, and movements continued apace (Bhagat, 1995). The reclamation of the past reaffirmed the faith in the strength of 'Indian womanhood', which led to the quest for an indigenous model of feminism. The theoretical feed back from the eco-feminist scholars like Mies and Shiva strengthened this trend (Shiva and Mies, 1993).

#### 4.8 Sita Sheti and Claiming for Political Power

***Shetkari Sanghatana*** - a peasant organisation in Maharashtra - which locates violence as the genesis of the patriarchal exploitative system – put the analytical discovery process of reclamation into practice with '*Sita sheti*' - a unique experience of women-worked farming. As a counter to 'green revolution' these small production units are self-dependent and produce for home consumption. *Sangathana* reclaims '*Sita*' to counter the BJP-Shiva Sena's '*Ram* politics'<sup>48</sup> as well.

*Sanghatana* proclaimed in 1986 that in order to combat the fundamental problems of insecurity and violence against women, their entry into the political power arena was imperative. As a follow up action a women's party - *Samagra Mahila Aghadi* (All Women's Front) was launched in rural Maharashtra to contest all seats for district council elections in 24 districts with *Sangathana*'s support in 1988, of which women had won some seats. This unique experience of political empowerment of rural women (without any reservation for women) was an effort to redress the balance of power.

The *Sanghatana*, from 1991 is taking up self-sufficient organic farming refraining peasants from using chemical fertilizers and pesticides and making them rely as far as possible on locally developed seeds. They reserve the option for not going to the market (Omvedt, 1991). Women under this program, cultivate their own land acquired under the '*Laxmi Mukti Campaign*' in the traditional manner without expense on inputs and with an aim to produce for the basic family needs.

#### 4.9 Reclaiming Chipko And Eco-feminism

The 'eco-feminist' trend begins with the reclamation of *Chipko* movement, though women led environmental action predates *Chipko*<sup>49</sup> and the Stockholm Environmental Conference of 1972. It was established that the history of *Chipko* was the history of the visions and actions of exceptionally courageous women like Meera Ben, Sarla Ben, Bimla Bahuguna and many others. Shiva (1989) posited that the life-enhancing paradigm of forestry in India has emerged from her ancient forest culture, in all its diversity and has been renewed in contemporary times by women through *Chipko*.

The active participation of women in ecological movements are neither new nor they seek a 'reclamation' drive to establish their identities. A series of mass movement against development projects deserting millions of poor in many parts of the country contains a common agenda - the demand for 'rehabilitation'. The *Narmada* movement needs no reference. The active participation of *adivasi* and non-*adivasi* (tribal / non-tribal) women in *Koel-karo* and *Kahalgaon* Power projects (Bharti, 1990c) including other such projects in Bihar seek no reclamation; the *Baliapal* movement against setting up of a nuclear power plant in the *Gandhamardan* hills of Orissa seek no feminist reclamation.

The fact that, it was the limitations of the Euro-centric feminism highlighted by the grassroots movements across the country and a 'failure' of the polarised view of feminism *per se* that compelled the 'feminists' look into their 'own strength'. This 'failure' led the feminist scholars and practitioners to 'discover' indigenous potential of feminist consciousness with a holistic, humanistic and culture-relative approach, as well as, 'advocate' an inclusive agenda for transforming this potential into sustained struggle. Indian feminism emerged out of the rough weather of late 80s, when it suffered 'identity crisis' as well as 'stagnation' in absence of a theoretical clarity and lack of a well-developed strategy, for quite some time. Thus, reclamation was a process towards 'self-retrospection'. This process helped evolving of a more holistic and mature Indian feminist perspectives during 1990s with varied orientation and with a focus over 'power' (5 below).

## 5. INDIAN FEMINISM AND ARTICULATION OF THE CATEGORY 'WOMAN'

The feminist streams, in the 1990s, have diversely articulated the category 'woman'. These streams either discard or accept the limitations of the Euro-centric feminist perspectives for Indian context. This diversely articulated 'woman' is power symbolized.

### 5.1 Matri Shakti: The Mother's Power

The Hindu feminist stream articulates the category 'woman' around the *Matri Shakti*, viz. the mother's power concept and image of woman (Kapur et al, 1993). The mobilisation of women by the "Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangha (RSS) and the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) started afresh<sup>50</sup> in the nineties after the feminist movement generated a sense of



competitiveness within the party politics. As a counter-trend to 'westernised' feminism, ***Durga Vahini*** - based on tri-principle of 'Seva, Sanskriti, and Sanskar' – all symbolizing 'motherhood' was launched by the BJP.

The ***Rashtriya Sevika Samiti*** - the RSS affiliate women's organisation constructs a new image<sup>51</sup> of a powerful economically independent Indian woman (Sarkar, 1991: 2062) as opposed to the *Manusmriti* ascribed docile, dependent and passive Hindu woman. The *Samiti* assigns importance to physical courage, strength and a trained hardened female body as opposed to a traditionally established concept of delicate, weaker (than men) and vulnerable female body. Women are imparted tough physical training and taught self-defence to counter day-to-day sexual violence and other forms of gender oppression in domestic as well as in non-domestic spheres.

## **5.2 The Rural Woman: Symbolizing Woman's Power**

Omvedt's articulation of the category 'woman' revolves round the symbol of women's power constructed around rural women. It goes beyond the class / caste dimensions. The emergence of new women's organisations linked to the mass organisations, according to Omvedt (1993:200) has unleashed a new dynamics leading to the evolvement of a new feminist perspective that poses challenge to the traditional Marxism and traditional feminism both in its own ways and goes beyond the simple posing of 'class' and 'gender' or 'class' and 'caste'. This stream has developed in Maharashtra.

## **5.3 The Feminine Principle: Primordial Woman's Power**

Shiva's articulation of the category 'woman' also revolves round women's power resting in the 'recovery of the feminine principle' (Chapter-2). Shiva (1989) argues that Indian women have challenged the most fundamental categories of the western patriarchy<sup>52</sup> in the course of their struggle for sustenance and survival. These struggles are rooted in preservation and recovery of feminine principle. The feminine principle is:

A 'feminist ideology' that transcends gender, and a 'political practice' humanly inclusive, challenging the dominant concept of 'power as violence' with the alternative concept of 'non-violence as power'. (Shiva, 1989: viii, inverted mine)

Shiva's position has emerged as the most vocal eco-feminism in India though she makes a qualitative distinction between the 'eco-feminism' and the 'feminine principle'. While eco-feminism emerging out of ecological and environmental movements in the West aims at 'conservation' of the existing ecology for future purposes, in India, it is closely connected with the day-to-day survival of the poor. While 'eco-feminism' defines 'sustainability' as natural resource-management without altering the underlying western patriarchal assumptions of duality in existence and linearity in process, the feminine principle underlies the assumptions of dialectical unity and cyclical recovery shared by the common concern. Shiva further states:

Within the western paradigm, the environmental movement is separate from the women's movement. 'Environmentalism' and 'feminism' independently ask only for concessions within maldevelopment. Environmentalism then becomes a new patriarchal project of technological fixes and political oppression. (Shiva, *ibid*: 48, emphasis original)

#### **5.4 Whole Human being and Femininization of Religion**

Gabriele Dietrich articulates the category 'woman' in the wholeness of human being, in all its dimensions, viz. material, experiential, spiritual etc. Her orientation on sex, work, culture, ecology has a humanist essence with cultural relativity. For instance, discussion on sexuality in Indian feminist perspective, she argues, is not about free sex, but about power relationships and violation of human dignity.

One of her main concerns is the rising communalism in India and building up of a human secular Indian state. She states:

What unite all of us is the struggle against communalism and religious chauvinism, one of the acutest dangers in our national political process. My contention is that despite being sharpened by alienations of caste, class, and patriarchy, religion like art is also a field in which the human capacity for transcendence and transformation is expressed in a symbolic way. (Dietrich, 1992: viii)

And, therefore, she strongly recommends that,

Religious resources need to be explored and transformed from a women-centered perspective. (Dietrich, *ibid*)

While acknowledging the difficulties involved in building anti-communalist alliance, she is optimistic about women's potential for taking up this challenge effectively and their ability to make the most crucial contribution towards building a truly humanist secular state (ibid, 1992:34). This stream is mainly developed in Tamilnadu.

### **5.5 The Woman's Body: Violence, Health, Work**

Gandhi and Shah (1991), the representatives of the 'hybrid' (Akerkar, 1995) Indian socialist feminism closer to the western feminists and urban oriented, weave their discussion around women's body and articulate the category 'woman' around three main issues: violence, health and work. The radicals and socialist-feminists both include caste, class and patriarchy and argue for a non-oppressive and free sexual relationship between the genders. They propose a 'non-patriarchal production system' as an alternative to the socialist system, because the socialist systems have failed to liberate women. This stream has developed in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

### **5.6 The Woman's Power to Resist and Change**

Irina Sen's (1990) articulation of the category 'woman' is that of an activist woman, not simply in the political sense of the term rather, in more general and broader sense of 'resisting' woman in 'rural' areas. This position is representative of the view held by a wide section of women's activists among the left groups and organisations, in general.

This articulation of woman extends to radical Marxist-feminist perspective, which are most pronounced in Bihar, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Bihar is a site of confluence of different sub-streams of this perspective. The radical Marxist-feminists brought into light their positions in mid-1993 in a seminar organised by one of the radical<sup>53</sup> left organisations at Patna to discuss 'women liberation and class-struggle'. About 400 delegates (of which 250 were women) from different women's organisations attended this seminar.

The *Nari Mukti Sangha* posited that mass-struggle was the only way to women liberation and the gender contradictions within the working class were possible to resolve through negotiations. For this, consistent struggle for a cultural transformation of society was imperative. The All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA) advocates an

autonomous women's movement to develop as mass movement and stresses the need for sharpening of the class struggle within women's movement. The radical Marxist-feminists incorporate 'patriarchy' and admit the failure of traditional communist movement in taking up gender issues effectively. This stream stands for a Marxist-feminist co-ordination.

## 5.7 Power of Indian Woman and Postmodernist Insights

Discovering of women's power must go down the family level and penetrate the intimate male-female relations, where women act as 'invisible' hands and men often become 'inactive'. Women act from behind the scene through making proper use of traditionally accorded space to negotiate with their husbands, families, communities etc. Susmita Dasgupta (1995) argues that the postmodernist intellectual attitude offers some insights to Indian social realities and Indian feminism can explore the intellectual potential of post-modernism for empowering Indian women, without constructing their 'self' as victim.

Dasgupta (1995) traces the root in Indian theology, which does not create hierarchies<sup>54</sup> like Western theology, heavily influenced by Lutheran asceticism<sup>55</sup>. She states:

Our ideological women are terrible female deities, boundless powerful, yet possessing dazzling sex appeal. The male deities are either adolescent *Krishna*, the ideal lover or indolent, passive, inactive *Shiva*, the virility defied. Neither is the authoritarian patriarch. (Dasgupta, *ibid*: 1531, italics mine)

Dasgupta argues that Indian women already having the source of strength and power in their metatexts and metaphors have been unconsciously, in a constructive manner, using the fundamental principles<sup>56</sup> of postmodernism, to resolve their existential anomalies in a more aesthetic and effective way. They fight from within their own sexuality and criticise men more for their lack of masculinity rather than booking them as wife batterers!

Overburdened with work, Indian women, complain about non-sharing of work by men, yet it is common to find a middle class modern urban family, where man says that his wife's possessiveness about 'home' has made him an 'outcaste' from and even 'absent' in his home. The dominating wives, self-willed daughters, demanding sisters and controlling mothers are not uncommon sites in Indian homes. Similarly, dependent and docile husbands are also not very uncommon. And, all this takes place outside the purview of

'feminism'. Women capture power completely ignoring the religious dictates that their husbands are their lords. Indian women, despite the syntactical restrictions on their power, despite various disadvantages mounted upon them by the social structure nevertheless reverse the dominance-subordination dyad. Indian novelists<sup>57</sup> have also fought the battle, on the side of women and today there are few feminists who can compete with the Indian writers - both male and female - in the wholeness of their understanding of 'feminism'.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The category 'woman' in India is articulated diversely and this diversity stems from the specific circumlocution of the feminist movements. Indian diversity itself requires a diverse practice and multiple responses. The Indian context strongly argues for a 'pluralistic feminism'. However, the common locus, from where all the streams articulate the category of woman is 'power', i.e. they speak from a position of strength.

While Omvedt and Shiva both articulate the category 'woman' in terms of 'power' in direct version, Dietrich focus is over women's 'capability'. Hindu feminist stream articulates woman in terms of 'mother power', the supreme expression of woman's power in Indian tradition. And, the radical Marxist-feminist stream articulates woman in terms of militant 'power' power to 'resist and change', a warrior image of woman's power.

Shiva's analysis takes off from the feminine principle, which in itself is women's power embodied. Omvedt's, Dietrich's and radical Marxist-feminist analyses take off from the concrete contexts of grassroots struggle. India has new emerging women's organisations linked to mass organisations (Omvedt); autonomous women's organisations working under the umbrella of the radical left ideology (radical Marxist-feminist model); and a feminist ideology, that transcends gender (Shiva).

India has feminist political practices that are humanly inclusive (radical Marxist-feminist, feminine principle, Omvedt's and Dietrich's organisations). All these streams contain a humanist essence with cultural relativity. While Omvedt, Shiva, Dietrich, Gandhi and Shah - all critique violence and underground politics, it is only the radical Marxist-feminist organisations, which believe in underground politics and violence as a part of strategy (in favour of their parent organisations) though, they themselves hardly practise it. It needs

to be reminded here that the radical Marxist-feminist organisations are open mass organisations, even if, they are affiliated with an underground radical organisation. Therefore, India has 'non-violence' as the alternative concept of power in contrast to the violence as the dominant concept<sup>58</sup> of power.

Indian feminism is not only a product of 'rough weather', but it is against this setting that it is evolving and maturing. Indian feminism is consistently maturing as a movement - humanly inclusive with rural mass character - gradually discovering and consolidating woman's strength and power. The concepts such as 'feminine principle' and '*stri shakti*' implies not a 'separate' women's movement but leading role of women with their own worldview in mass movements. Indian feminism is developing a 'women's worldview' that is rooted in ground realities. The 'feminism from above' (Chapter - 4 below) further affirms this evolution.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **WOMEN'S STUDIES IN INDIA: CHANGING THE HISTORY OF THE RULING GENDER**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

While the notion of area studies, minority studies, ethnic studies and so on are easily accepted; there still exists a resistance to the notion of women's studies in India. This resistance comes from the idea that there is no women's history vs. men's history, women's sociology vs. men's sociology or women's economics vs. men's economics. True enough, but what Women's Studies (WSs henceforth) contend is that the analysis of society and the human condition gets distorted and biased and is rendered inadequately by the exclusion of gender and to that extent it is not just the half-truth but a falsified view of life as well. It is argued here that human history has so far remained the history of the ruling gender, as in essence, it has remained the history of the ruling classes. WSs is viewed here as the 'movement from above' to change this arbitrary world view of all existing knowledge and develop an alternative world of knowledge that could not only supplement but also qualitatively transform the gender-biased world view of knowledge as a whole.

It was the local extension of the western knowledge and theorisation that initially dominated the WSs perception, analysis, and treatment of women's issues in India. The WSs began with probing the conceptual assumptions of the social sciences since early 1970s. The analyses about positioning of women as a subject for study in the context of complex Indian social environment drew serious attention. Discourses over structures of patriarchal dominance and power within Indian social situation caught researchers mind. The diversifying of the feminist movement and their impact on individual lives as well as collective action, however, considerably changed the researcher's perception of 'women' radically between early 70s and late-90s, and last 15 year experience have been particularly rich in this context.

The prevailing paradigm in WSs until late 80s was, what Krishnaraj (1988a) has termed as, the 'compensatory model'. The 'power' in WSs, until then, was conceptualised as reduction of helplessness or vulnerability<sup>1</sup>. Power as 'power to change', power as

'autonomy' were beyond the purview of the WSs. Power to question began since late 80s and WSs, since then simultaneously acquired 'power to redefine'. The process did not stop here. The WSs is not satisfied now just with having been accommodated in the realm of power but strongly demands power to change the power-relations. The range and scope of feminist inquiry has now expanded to questioning the gendering of power relationship in all areas of human life.

It is submitted that this chapter deviates from a conventional scheme of literature survey on the central theme (which is adequately attempted in Chapter - 2 above) and treats the WSs, what I term, as 'feminism from above'. Women's studies body of literature is approached through a vision of tracing its evolvment since beginning to this date. This chapter is accordingly arranged in five sections below. Section two addresses some of the key concepts, which are articulated in the empirical parts (III and IV) of this study. Section three traces the progression in development studies beginning from 'women's participation' to 'women agency' and to gender perspective. Section four traces the trajectory that the WSs have taken through its interaction with the spontaneous struggles of women throughout the country, under the sub-title movement studies. Section five presents a feminist critique to neo-classical economics, market-led development, science and knowledge. Section six offers alternative visions for development. The chapter concludes with arguing for a women's worldview (WWV) that appears to evolve in course of this literary endeavour of changing the history of the ruling gender.

## **2. THE KEY CONCEPTS**

The WSs persons, in India, have researched and articulated some of the 'key concepts' such as 'patriarchy', 'household', 'female households' in different ways and offer different interpretation. These concepts offer scope for re-articulation in the context of my empirical findings. A brief literature survey of these concepts is presented below.

### **2.1 Patriarchy and Positioning of Indian women**

Subordination is exercising of individual power and patriarchy is institutionalised collective power (Krishnaraj, 1988b). The analysis of patriarchy and the structures of patriarchal



dominance have developed through global feminist practice, though details and precise positions vary depending on positions the feminists take vis-à-vis rest of society.

The historical roots of patriarchy has been examined by Lerner (1986), the operation of this institution in family and economic spheres by Delphy (1984), and in legal institutions, the state, and social policy by Gordon (1990) and Agarwal (1988a). These works have added substantially to the understanding of power and have addressed gender issues, from a broadly political economy perspective. In India, 'patriarchy' has been studied as it operates (Mies, 1980).

Attempts to 'rediscover' patriarchy have led to conceptualise three types of patriarchies operating in India. These are state, societal, and family patriarchies. Patriarchy, in India, thus has been located to be working powerful not only within a family. The functional concepts of 'societal' and 'state' patriarchies are popular though may not be much acclaimed within academia. Bardhan (1989) has used these functional concepts and argues that patriarchies (family, societal, state) play differential role within double/ triple hierarchies of class, caste, and ethnicity and / other local conditions. Islam (1991) has used 'societal' patriarchy in the context of female-headed households. The concept of 'triple' patriarchy is useful for this study (Parts III and IV below).

Banerjee (1998) argues that challenging the patriarchal ethos of society has never been an agenda of the Indian state. The Indian state instead reinforced state patriarchy. From the lofty heights of a radical ideology put forth by the historical report about "women's role in planned economy" (WRPE) prepared in 1930 for the Congress party, the policy-makers descended into benign welfarism, when they got opportunity to build a society of their own. This report remained deeply buried until 1995 when Maitreyee Krishnaraj resurrected it from the archival sources and brought it to public notice. Krishnaraj (1998) has discovered that WRPE was a serious effort to collate the available information on women's position in India and to recommend some measures for a rapid change. Banerjee, however, does not spare the failure of women's movement during Nehruvian period either, which in its exclusive dependence (see Chapter 3) on the state, neglected mass mobilisation and stayed blind to subtle patriarchal barriers.

Some sensitive scholars have highlighted gender-based inequalities in various institutional spheres, heavily charged with patriarchal norms, such as: caste (Chowdhary,

1994), economy (Mies, 1982), legal institutions and state (Agarwal, 1994, Swaminathan, 1987). Dreze and Sen (1996) study about economic development and social opportunities and gender-inequalities embedded therein is also a gender-sensitive work.

One feminist position views Indian women as a more exploited class (Towards Equality, 1974). Traditional Marxist party-affiliate women's organisations also subscribe to this position. The other position views women as a community of shared interests and problems irrespective of their class location in the social matrix. This position locates patriarchal institutions at the root of most forms of women oppression. The groups, publications, like Manushi, Kali for Women espousing radical feminist position come in this category.

Some scholars take a synthetical position and accept class and patriarchy both as a 'double hierarchy' system of women's oppression of varying degree and forms. Bardhan (1993) posits that in highly stratified Indian society women are placed within 'triple hierarchy' system and interaction between the **class** exploitation, **patriarchal** domination, and **caste / ethnic** oppression and discrimination constitute the core of their chronic disadvantages. The constraints and opportunities in a stratified society are thus, differentiated by class, caste / ethnicity, and regional conditions. Each of these have gender-differentiated effects. The concepts of class and gender, according to Rai (1987) provide us with a framework for examining the status of women within different agrarian classes. The position that emerges out of this framework becomes a composite whole consisting of social and economic factors, which combine to create the situation within which women live and work.

## 2.2 The Household

The two dominant paradigms of economics, Neoclassical theory and Marxian theory - have remarkably similar theories of the household and economists of both persuasions tend to treat the household as an almost wholly cooperative and altruistic unit. Samuelson (1956) argued in 1956 that altruism prevails within the family. Becker (1981) interprets<sup>2</sup> the concept of 'benevolent dictator' in the context of a household, as an essentially altruistic collectivity: the aggregation of individual utilities into a joint welfare function; of individual incomes into a common budget; of individual family labour into an abstract pool of household labour; and of aggregating individual members into a single

decision making unit. The household welfare function, according to Becker, is identical to that of the benevolent dictator who heads the household and ensures that welfare resources are optimally allocated between household members.

The market-infused structural changes have significantly changed household structures in developing regions across the globe. The alternative approach evolving in the process of these changes visualises the household as a site of conflicts and bargaining. Amartya Sen's household, for instance, is a site of 'cooperative conflicts'. Sen (1990) argues that cooperation between household members takes place as long as it leads to outcomes that are preferable to those who prevail in the absence of cooperation. The bargaining problem arises over the choice between alternative cooperative outcomes, on the one hand, and whether to cooperate at all, on the other.

Both the models posit a correlation between welfare levels and economic contributions of household members, but offer different explanations for it. While in the former, the correlation is considered to reflect the economic rationality of favouring more productive members; in the latter it is attributed to the greater bargaining power of more visible productive members.

Bargaining models of the household have a number of advantages over altruistic models for the study of gender relations (Kabeer, 1994) but the fact remains that household, in India, is not yet transformed into a perfect site of market relations though money, economic interests, and even politics now penetrate the most intimate arena of relationships. The danger involved in study of gender relations from a bargaining model position is that it may lead to facile findings.

Folbre (1986) argues that household is neither a 'heart' nor a 'spade', probably a combination of the two. If pure altruism within a family is a Marxian utopia, family is not a perfect site for an imperfect competitive market either. Moore (1988) has rightly observed that the control and allocation of resources within a household is a complex process, which has to be seen in relation to a web of rights and obligations. Thus, it is not a static process that makes one partner (male) to dictate and the other (female) to do whatever dictated to her.

## **2.3 The Female Headed Household**

Kumari (1989) defines a 'female-headed household', in Indian context, as one in which female is the major provider and / or protector, carrier, bearer and decision-maker in the household. She discovers two broad categories of female headed household: one, in which an adult male member is 'permanently absent' such as single mothers, divorced, widowed and deserted women; and the other, in which the adult male is 'temporarily absent' contributing little or nothing to family income.

Kumari argues that a woman may head a household by compulsion or by choice, yet the female headedness is usually an 'imposed' position. She also makes distinction between a household, which is female-headed in full sense, and a household, where female headedness is an upwardly mobile strategy, in which a husband migrates for earning and female headedness is being imposed.

Islam's (1991) findings in Bangladesh suggest that female-headed households exist 'essentially' in absence<sup>3</sup> of the male in a house for whatsoever reasons. While the female heads may be freed from male control at the household level i.e. family patriarchy, they are subjected to patriarchal control to a more significant degree at the community level i.e. societal patriarchy.

Adnan (1990) argues that 'female head' of a household in terms of conventional definitions of authority, headship and power moves into vacuum, because the customary social conditioning does not prepare women for the role of household head. Adnan, while appears to ignore the dynamics of social changes, also seems to be unable to comprehend the empowering potential of customary responsibilities assigned to women and to see how women act visible or invisible while 'realising' their power to act within their realm of affairs. Lewis (1993) has reviewed some studies about female-headed households and prepared a set of criterion for a household to qualify as 'female headed'. These are:

- 'Absentee' criteria i.e. the extent of the absence of a male in a household;
- 'Decision-making' criteria, i.e. the decision making process within the household;
- Relationship between female-headedness and poverty; and
- The 'process' or 'route' whereby a household becomes female headed.

### 3. THE DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

What pass through the eyes as WSs in India is mainly development studies and what consists of the substantial body of development studies literature is mainly confined to agricultural sector. The empirical studies about market and its gender-relative implications are still scanty. The initial backing for WSs came from those deeply concerned about women's status and its growth remained mainly confined to institutions of higher learning. Unlike in the West, WSs in India has not come as a demand from the movement. It owes its growth mainly to a few committed individuals, official patronage and support of the international funding agencies (Krishnaraj, 1988a). To some extent, the funding agencies supported research through those directly involved in action. The Ford Foundation has generously contributed to the setting up of women's studies and research in India (Mies, 1986; Basu, 1999).

It officially began with Towards Equality<sup>4</sup> (1974) that brought many startling findings, necessitating deeper investigation into the issues concerning women and drew researcher's attention towards empirical studies focussed on the women's role in economic production. The Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), accordingly, funded several studies which highlighted the fact that deprived of an income and relative economic independence, a woman's position and status would further deteriorate in one way or another - a conforming to the common Euro-centric generalisation about the third world women 'invisible' in economic production. It took some time to realise that the notion of economic independence, as a panacea for gender inequality, was severely class bound.

The WSs, during 1970s mainly focussed on attempts: to measure the long terms decline in female employment; to comprehend the factors responsible for striking regional variations in female work participation; to assess the adequacy of existing modes of data collection on women's work; and to evolve alternative methods of capturing women's work (Krishnaraj, 1985). This all, however, began after the new technology era began in India.

### 3.1 The New Technology And Exploring of Women's Participation

With the new technology induced development efforts, the 'gender-neutral' research activities proliferated in green-revolution pockets of Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, in the north; Maharashtra, and Gujarat in the west; and coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Tamilnadu in the south. One of the important contributions of these research endeavours was lively 'production mode' debate<sup>5</sup> generated during seventies around two distinct political-economy positions to characterise the changing agrarian relations in India - largely attributing to green revolution playing as the 'catalyst'. The one position discovered the 'capitalist' production relations as the dominant production relations in Indian agriculture (Thorner, 1969,1976; Rudra, 1970, 1978; Patnaik, 1971 and many others), and the other explored the 'semi-feudal' production relations (Prasad, 1973; Bhaduri, 1973 and others) dominating the agrarian relations. The basis for the former position was provided by the empirical findings in developed 'green pockets' such as Punjab, Haryana, western UP and for the latter, by the empirical findings in relatively under-developed regions, such as Bihar, west Bengal, and eastern Uttar Pradesh. I argue that neither of these two positions were able to view Indian agriculture in its wholeness and therefore, were 'prone' to speak partial truths through generalisations. This deserves attention in Indian context, where a large section of the people's movement drew ideological support from these theorisations. The theoretical positions guided social action. For instance, while capitalist position provided theoretical underpinnings to a section of the radical movement, the semi-feudal position attracted its substantial part (Chapter - 5 below).

The **green revolution** combined a mixture of market incentives, heavily regulated market provision and non-market distribution (Farmer, 1977; Vaidyanathan, 1994). By mid-1990s, it became evident that green revolution had faltered<sup>6</sup>. The early economic reforms in India reinforced a reactionary agrarian politics and supported an anti-agricultural policy, manifested in increasing inter-regional disparities in absolute yields and in growth trajectories between the revolutionary heartland of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh in the northwest and the underdeveloped peripheries of Bihar, Orissa, and Assam in the north and east. A 'reverse land reforms'<sup>7</sup> advocacy also illustrates this elitist agrarian reaction (Rao and Gulati, 1994; Johl, 1995). Agarwal (1998) argues that the pace of agrarian transformation in India has been such as to leave the vast majority of population still dependent on land-based livelihoods and the form it has taken has

created significant gender disparities in non-farm livelihood options. The absence of a gender perspective in most analysis and policy formulation has tended to obscure this feature of agrarian change.

Agriculture still remains the mainstay of female employment in India. The dependency on agriculture (Mukherjee, 1984) during early 1980s was higher for female (85 percent) than male (75 percent) and this trend still continues. A marked shift in composition of rural female work force between 1961 and 1981, characterised by a sharp rise in the 'labour' category were recorded in Indian censuses. A sharp fall in female 'cultivators' category in all the states were also noticed.

While green revolution generated **feminisation of poverty**, it succeeded and relied on increasingly female labour force (Harriss-White and Janakrajan, 1997). Some of the empirical studies during mid-80s have separately assessed the implications of the new technology for female employment, wages, and earnings (Agarwal, 1984 for rice-cultivation in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Orissa; Chand et al, 1985 for wheat and rice cultivation in Punjab; Raj et al, 1985 in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala; Joshi and Alshi, 1985 in Maharashtra). These studies concluded that demand for family labour exceeded the demand for hired labour; demand for female labour exceeded the male labour; and hired casual female labour recorded the highest demand in the labour market! Rai's study (1987) about female agricultural labourer suggests that development has strengthened the traditional sexual labour division. Saradamoni (1987), by contrast, notes a relaxing of rigid sexual division of labour in rice cultivation.

The twin components of green revolution – the **biotechnology** and the **mechanical technology** were usually viewed as distinct from each other. Byres (1981) refuted this view as 'fragmented' and argued that this distinction was an ideological artifact and the two components were complementary, in practice, though the former was somehow scale-neutral.

Mechanisation is neither class-neutral nor gender-neutral – some studies (Agarwal, 1984; Ahmad, 1985, 1994; Rai, 1987) brought this fact to light. It reduced women's workload in resourceful families but bypassed the poor relegating them to a secondary status in the rural labour market. It has differential impact on female labour use relegating them concentrate in domestic and non-market roles and labour-intensive activities.

Mechanisation in harvesting and threshing has displaced manual labour as well as transformed many of traditionally female operations (weeding, harvesting, grain processing etc.) into male operations, without offering any alternative to the female. Agarwal concludes that technological changes essentially lead to different gender-implications in terms of access to agricultural and non-agricultural work as well as of overall workload and in the intra-household distribution and consumption. Rai (op. cit) and Swaminathan (1987) observe that mechanisation has perpetuated wage differentials between the sexes, which was apparent if paid in cash and not so, if paid in kind. The payment modes in developed areas also vary by sex (Sawant and Dewan, 1979; Sinha, 1980; Agarwal, 1982).

Whitehead (1985) argues that technology is embedded in social relations and an intimate two-way link does exist between the two. Even the 'limited' scale neutrality (Byres, 1981) of the HYV technology depends on the socio-economic environment it is introduced in and it is the interface of social and technological factors which determine the final outcome. Ghosh and Mukhopadhyay (1984) suggested that development policies and choice of technologies without any consideration for their social and economic implications for differential gender impacts has led to serious imbalances between the sexes, in terms of status, opportunities and potentials for their contribution to development process.

The growth of **cash crops** in India from mid-19th century onwards and its impact on agrarian relations has been well documented in commercialisation literature (for an excellent overview for different regions of India see Raj et al, 1985). The production cycle of most crops in India is sex-sequential and dependent on hired labour. In such a situation, introduction of or shift to a particular cash crop may have significant impact over female employment. For instance, Mies (1984) informs that the introduction of cigarette tobacco in the early 1920s had significant impact on female labour, as tobacco cultivation was largely dependent on female labour for transplanting, weeding, de-pasting, harvesting and curing. Opium cultivation in Bihar<sup>8</sup>, at about same time, was largely dependent on family labour. Similar was (is) the case with jute production in the northeast Bihar and tea plantation in Assam. Reddy (1981) brought to light that expansion of cotton cultivation had a positive impact on female employment in Maharashtra.



The phenomenal rise in the number of **female-headed households** as a key function of male 'out migration' arrested researchers attention since eighties. Studies on migration (Desai, 1982; Jetley, 1987; Gulati, 1987) largely focussed the rural to urban migration<sup>9</sup> and its impact over women left behind in the farming sector. The unanimous conclusion arrived at was that the greater participation of peasant women in farm work and their direct interaction with the market was mainly a function of male out migration. This 'outsiding' of peasant women necessitating their direct interaction with the market eventually contributed to a gradual erosion in the social norms relating to female seclusion from the male spheres. This had class-differential impacts in generating equitable opportunities for women vis-à-vis men. For instance, migration from lower and middle income group rural families became 'input' for economic improvement with positive effect for women in terms of entitlement, opportunities and attitudinal upliftment (Bardhan, op cit) of the migrant and his family. In case of rural poor families, Jetley (op.cit) concludes that it neither led to the greater autonomy for women nor succeeded in pulling the families out of their poverty trap. It, instead increased women's workload and compounded their survival hardships. This was a common finding that the 'remittance' as the additional source of income did not substantially change the economic status of the poor families and what they got in return for prolonged displacement of family life, emotional deprivation and insecure future was - poverty reduced to a little extent, which hardly elevated their overall life conditions.

Attempts to study a gendered positioning of the poor households also began simultaneously. Agarwal (1986) discovered in Gujarat and Maharashtra that relative to male-headed poor households female-headed poor households were more likely to depend on wage-labour; had less access to productive resources; more vulnerable to work-opportunities; and belonged to higher age-group with lower education level as well as higher illiteracy. Even among the very poor the female-headed households were a more marginalized group. These characteristics combined with the socio-legal structures implied that female-headed households were more prone to poverty.

### **3.2 Exploring the Women Agency**

The WSs continued evolving through exploring newer areas of research around women - as 'agency'. Explorations into women's access to the household resources and opportunities, their decision-making power, sexuality and fertility management, dowry and

market in marriage etc. began. Redefining and recasting of the concepts such as health, education also went on simultaneously.

It has been argued that female autonomy and power was a function of **access to strategic resources** within the households, which was class-defined. Bardhan (1989, 1991) and Agarwal (1988b) emphasize that the access to land resource alone could hardly help women effectively unless changes in divorce laws, inheritance laws, adoption of a uniform civil code etc. were effected.

Many have studied the class-differential impact of development for peasant women. Agarwal (1984) observed that in small peasant households, 'self-exploitation', i.e. family labour bore the burden of maintaining competitive edge in production activities. In rich peasant households while consequent increase in profitability meant a better consumption basket, women's role is transformed as active supervisors (Sardamoni, 1987) of the field operations. The ratio of managerial to manual work, in the high growth areas was found to be increased and the housework load for these farm household women on the other hand, was noted as inversely correlated with the incidence of poor women working as maid (Bardhan, 1989, 1991). It is also observed that domestic work becomes a sector of ultra-exploited wage-labour as well as of strenuous use-value production in the absence of better employment.

Sen's unique study (1988) about gender aspect of **work-time allocation** suggested that women across all the classes spend approximately half of their total working hours in domestic work while men spend very little time over it. Women were found to have a greater tendency (than men) to stay closer to base, i.e. home, as well in all classes.

An analysis of **decision-making** gives a good understanding of the division of responsibilities within the family. Bardhan (1985, 1989) argues that women's role in decision-making depends on the power structure in the peasant households not just between men and women but also among women themselves; on how divided they are in hierarchy and how united in mutual support-network. The 'visibility' factor may affect decision-making power, in negative and positive, both ways. With the growing prosperity in rural areas the 'in siding' of women often cited as 'status advancement' may negatively effect their decision-making role which declines with inclining position of the household in the social hierarchy (Harriss, 1979). Other studies (Sisodia, 1985; Sharma, 1985) reveal

opposite trends, i.e. that women are consulted in agricultural decisions such as choice of crops, seed-variety, fertiliser-use, quantity to be marketed etc., with their 'invisibility' associated with inclining status of the family. Decision-making depends on power along with the responsibility and power of decision-making may not necessarily be acquired via economic status alone. Sharma (1980), Karlekar (1995) and many others observe that there exists no correlation between the degree of economic contribution and decision-making.

Approaching dowry from a 'market in marriage' viewpoint attracted researcher's attention after 1980s though Krishnaji (1980) dealt with the problem of land transfer for dowry payments much before indicating towards a tendency of 'accumulation' of land through dowry. Sharma (1984) in her study about Himachal Pradesh, approached dowry as a concrete form of property in which the members of the household, both men and women, have different kind of interest and over which they have different kinds of control. Sharma argues that dowry as property divides women among themselves. Heyer's study (1992) about a south Indian community with rich people where dowry has been introduced has taken note of the role and function of dowry in accumulation process and concludes that women have become the vehicles of capital transfer. The role and function of land acquired as dowry in production, accumulation, and distribution processes as well as its impact over gender relations and decision-making power of women in rich families are unexplored.

The transformation of dowry from a cultural<sup>10</sup> practice into a blatant market behaviour has been markedly fast over last three decades has not been seriously attempted so far, though a direct correlation between the growing consumerism and rising dowry demands is apparent. It is not an accident that it is Delhi, Haryana, western UP, Punjab, and cities like Chandigarh and Bangalore, (i.e. the developed green revolution pockets), where the highest number of cases of dowry-killings is recorded. It is again not an accident that this incidence is still lower in the 'so called' backward regions like eastern UP, Bihar, west Bengal and other northeastern states.

The sex-preselection clinics have proliferated in modern cities like Chandigarh, Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore and Baroda. Studies (Balasubramanyam, 1982 and many others) about amniocentesis and femicide bring into light the tendencies behind misuse of the sex-preselection technique. However, serious attempt to look into the genesis of this

violence is missing. Dowry-killings, femicide, and other kind of anti-women violent practices are closely linked with the culture of the development itself which has been systematically destroying sensitivity in human and gender relations both.

Bardhan (1985) argued long before that violence and anti-women tendencies in India were a direct result of the changing economic participation of women in agriculture. Mies (1986), by contrast, stated that it was not village India that was holding back the civilising process among the urban educated middle class, but it was the capital-patriarchal civilization itself that was the father of the barbarism. These observations putting together with the newspaper clippings carrying information about dowry-murders, femicide, suicide by women in cities like Bangalore (Karnataka) and Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala) - the most 'developed' sites of underdeveloped India - seek attention of the WSs.

Discussion over **sexuality and management of human fertility** presents a complex set of issues (Young, 1978) that are central to the feminist demand for reproductive autonomy as a necessary condition for women's emancipation in the West. The sensitivity of this issue can create more difficult situation in rural social context in India. Dietrich (1992) visualising this difficulty, argues that discussion over sexuality in India cannot be about free-sex, but rather in terms of power relationship between the sexes and human dignity.

A move from the conventional analysis of **morbidity** as a measurable indicator of health and 'well being' is taking place. It is now argued that health defined broadly as a feeling of physical, mental, spiritual 'well being' is often juxtaposed to its definition as absence of disease and infirmity. Madhiwalla and Jesani (1997) argue that the 'relationship' between the 'well being' and 'absence of disease' is very complex and people's perception of their health, illness, and causative factors is based on social, economic, cultural and environmental and many other factors. The gender implications of this 'relationship' are yet to probe into, though it was noted that women's perception of their 'well being' were different from men's. The conventional scientific viewpoint that those who live in poverty, degraded living environment, involved in work hazardous to health etc. have necessarily a lower feeling of well being and complain more of ill health, is contradicted by Duggal and Amin (1989), who noted that rich and well placed people complained more of illness (than poor) and men complained more of illness (than women). The findings of the

National Sample Survey (1992) also noted that people in underdeveloped states in India reported less morbidity than those in the developed states.

The gender inequality in terms of literacy and education has been brought to light since beginning and the empirical findings later suggested that the nature of education and literacy, until radically changed, cannot help eliminate gender-bias, because viewing women as second and subordinate sex was deep entrenched in curriculum itself. Therefore, need for attitudinal change received more consideration than the formal education in WSs. Dreze and Sen (1996) argue that with nearly half the people - and close to two-thirds of women – illiterate, the transformation of the Indian economy and expansion of the social opportunities is no easy task. It is mistake to see the development of education, health care, and other basic achievements only as expansions of 'human resources' and accumulation of 'human capital'. People are not just the 'means' of production but the ultimate 'end'.

### 3.3 Evolving The Techniques of Quantifying Gender Inequalities

Gender relations are the key to understanding the inequalities between the sexes and these inequalities are expressed in explicit as well as implicit way (Mehta, 1996). The explicit measures, quantification of which is possible, are revealed in statistics. The single statistics, that was available until recently for capturing women's work in India was officially defined<sup>11</sup> 'productive' work. The latest India Human Development Report–1999 (IHDR–1999), which has, separately computed a 'gender adjusted index' has formulated two categories of work Usual<sup>12</sup> and Subsidiary<sup>13</sup> to capture the work participation rate (WPR) of both the genders. The female WPR is worked out to be 26 percent for India as a whole taking together both the work statuses.

The concern over the inadequacy of the national data systems, in capturing women's work, led to some positive changes in the 1991 census. Krishnaraj (1990b) suggests three things to do for making effective change at the policy level: detailed and meticulous research supported by evidence; continuous pressure by the informed groups; and international support. Some scholars (Agarwal, 1985a; Nayyar and Krishnamurty, 1985; Sen, 1983) have documented cultural biases in Census arising out of two reasons: due to respondent's gender bias and due to conceptual bias – emanating from the conventional economic concept of work itself.

It has been pointed out long before that the conventional Labour-Force Participation Rate derived from the censuses and the national surveys were incapable of covering the extended economic activities (Bennett et al, 1981) in a poor agrarian and largely non-monetised economy with a whole range of work done by women not categorised as 'productive'. Nayyar and Krishnamurthy (1985) and Bardhan (1985, 1989) also pointed that the number of female workers and extent of their participation in agricultural work, crop-processing, animal husbandry, and vegetable growing is underestimated in most censuses and large-scale surveys simply because much of this work is done in the home compound and often in combination with conventional domestic work.

The gender development index<sup>14</sup> (GDI) constructed by the HDR (1995) of the UNDP for 130 countries, spurred efforts to construct a similar index for Indian states (Prabhu et al, 1995). Hirway and Mahadevia (1996) offer an alternative<sup>15</sup> conceptual framework for measuring gender development in India at the individual and societal levels and computed GDM (gender development measure) for 15 Indian states.

The gender empowerment measure<sup>16</sup> (GEM) developed in the UNDP's HDR (1995) seeks to determine the degree to which women and men participate actively in economic, professional, and political activity and take part in decision making (Mehta, 1996). Hirway and Mahadevia (1996) argue that the GDI and the GEM of the UNDP are unsatisfactory because they: do not measure the concerns of women in the south; measure gender development at the individual level ignoring the macro and structural aspects of gender development; and are narrowly defined in terms of their coverage. Bardhan (1991) find both of these measures as inadequate to capture and quantify gender inequalities in India and argue that it would have really served the purpose, if the UNDP's attempt aimed at independent formulation of the GDI deriving its framework from the experiences of developing countries.

Mukherjee (1996) argues that the Indian data system has potential for recasting development measures more in consonance with the ground realities. Kulshreshtha and Singh (1996) in their attempt to examine the Satellite National Account-1993 (SNA) from a viewpoint of capturing women's activities in the domestic product estimation find the 1993 SNA as flexible enough to provide a room in the form of a satellite account where the contributions of the housewives are considered in totality by extending the production

boundaries as extended GDP. The satellite account also permits treatment of the issues like environment accounting.

### **3.4 Gender Studies: Towards Developing A Paradigm**

The almost uniform conclusion of the Decade's research is that with a few exceptions, women's relative access to economic resources, incomes and employment has worsened, their burden of work has increased, and their relative and even absolute health, nutritional, and educational status has declined. (DAWN, 1985: 21)

The above 'conclusion', though relates to the third world as a whole is equally valid for the Indian context. The growing realisation about the exploitative nature of the mainstream development having been disseminated through studies the questioning of the ongoing development process began by late 80s. Krishnaraj (1988a) sensed the most promising seeds of a new paradigm in this 'questioning' process and recognised the potential of WSs to grow as a developing paradigm and stated that the rigid sexual division of labour and the attendant notions of masculinity-femininity etc. did violence to both men and women, therefore, WSs needed to be evolved as Gender Studies.

The leading WSs persons, thus, over last 15 years have evolved as Gender Studies inquirers. Bina Agarwal, for instance, is among our best-known development economist, who has attempted diverse areas for studies ranging from green revolution, mechanisation, poverty, environment to land and legal rights – all from a gender perspective. Her work 'A Field of One's Own' (1994) offers a serious gender analysis.

Agarwal (1998) locates four types of challenges that a gender perspective poses to the conventional analysis in Indian context. It challenges the altruistic model of family based on the assumptions that the household is an undifferentiated unit in which members share common preference and interests, or it is governed mainly or solely by altruism. This stands in contrast to a unitary household model, hitherto central to development policies. This could be substantiated by the accumulated evidence over last two decades on intra-household gender inequalities, in India, most starkly revealed in the allocation of basic necessities such as health care and food (Sen A.K., 1987; Harriss, 1990; Dreze and Sen, 1996; Agarwal, 1986), education (Dreze and Sen, 1996), access to property and assets (Agarwal, 1994) and in gender division of labour (Dasgupta and Maiti, 1986).

The **gender-differential preferences**, mainly revealed in income-spending patterns and use of productive resources, poses second challenge. This could be substantiated by the findings (Mencher, 1989) that women in poor rural households spend the income they control mostly on the family, especially children's basic needs, while men spend a significant part of their incomes on personal goods. It is difficult to establish whether women's concern with family needs arises out of a greater inclination toward altruism than men, or from self-interest given their greater dependence on family members. It suggests that income in women's hand benefit not only women but also the whole family in greater extent than income solely in man's hands.

It challenges the assumption that **women's class** can be derived simply from their family's property status and class position. This could be substantiated by the findings (Omvedt, 1981; Barrett, 1980; Agarwal, 1994) that their class position remains vicarious: a well-placed marriage can raise it and a divorce or widowhood can lower it. Desertion is the most precarious.

It necessitates the need to comprehend the processes of **intra-household** dynamics and allocation. Anthropological and sociological descriptions of household interaction reveal that these interactions are characterised by both co-operation and conflicts. It assumes that the intra-household allocations can realistically be characterised as resulting from implicit and explicit bargaining among household members with differential bargaining power, which in turn, depends not only on economic parameters but on social norms and perceptions about contributions or deservedness as well. Agarwal (1997) argues that to improve the bargaining position of women<sup>17</sup>, strengthening of their economic position as well as changing of gendered norms and perceptions are needed.

Agarwal (1998) argues that the issue of women's independent access to land and livelihood now need to be linked to productive efficiency<sup>18</sup>. Prevailing male bias in access to land and in infrastructure support to farmers is undercutting the real potential that exists for enhancing production through a more gender-egalitarian approach. Agarwal suggests for women to take up collective farming<sup>19</sup> to realise this potential.

The possibility of gender-specific differences in interests and preferences, within a bargaining framework of analysis, opens up the space for recognising that resources in



women's hands could promote not only gender justice, but also welfare and efficiency. Agarwal (ibid) enthusiastically argues that women can have common gender interests which, in particular contexts, could outweigh divisive class / caste interests, and opens up the possibilities of broad based collective action by women for changing existing gendered structures.

The process of deconstructing patriarchy, of identifying its characteristics under different social formations, however, is still a task ahead. A greater methodological precision to analyse the differential impact of both development and patriarchy between different classes / castes of women is needed.

### **3.5 Gender and Postmodernism: Points of Convergence**

Feminist debate over postmodernism in India has evoked diverse responses. While some scholars have produced critique to postmodernism (Krishnaraj, 1990a; Srikantha, 1997; Gupta, 1995), some others have brought to sight the limited usefulness of postmodernist intellectual attitudes to Indian context (Sangari, 1987; Tharu, 1988). The constructive use of the feminist postmodern insights have helped open up entirely new non-western fields - like women in colonial history (Mani, 1989) or the contemporary realignments of caste and community (Tharu and Niranjana, 1994). The debate<sup>20</sup> over postmodernist feminism initiated by Dipankar Gupta and joined by Dasgupta, Mary E. John, A. Chakraborty, Poonacha and others in 1995, also provide with varied insights into the relevance of postmodernist intellectual attitudes to the Indian context of gender relations. Susmita Dasgupta (1995) offers a deeper and broader understanding of this 'relevance' and usefulness (see Chapter 1 and 2 above) and argues that the postmodernist insights could be realised in development policy as it is capable of offering a solution-oriented development theory.

Despite many differences in ideology and beliefs, the expanding gender in development areas share a few vital points of convergence (Karlekar, 1995) with feminist theory and post-modernism: both celebrate the legitimacy of competing voices of women which question the notion of a single truth. Plurivocality influences development strategies as well as the post-modernist intellectual attitude. While development strategies stress the need to involve women in decision-making processes and thereby empower them, postmodernism also speaks of giving a voice to the hitherto mute and oppressed.

Feminists claim the right to contribute to knowledge creation often by deposing reigning canons. So does postmodernism, but for the former, the context is of vital importance.

#### 4. THE MOVEMENT STUDIES: MAKING A CASE FOR WOMEN'S WORLD VIEW

The 'category' of people's movements is so broadly defined that it can comprise anything from pigeon-breeders association to the Tebhaga movement in Bengal and Telangana in Andhra (Dietrich, 1996). This section is concerned with the 'category' question, because, here the focus is emerging women's organisations linked to and within the peasant movement. WSs in India, as appears from the section-II has mainly remained development studies. There is a felt need for developing the tradition of Movement Studies, because documentation of the peasant movement and issues arising in the course of struggle has found limited space in WSs.

Feminist historiographies of some of the sustained peasant struggles were attempted as a part of the 'feminist reclamation' of mass struggles (Chapter 2). The main source of documentation of peasant movements, of which women historically remained a part, has been their own reports, journals, and unstructured and structured information etc., i.e. the informal sources. Feminist movement, in this sense, developed the tradition of a better-organised documentation. Feminist journals such as *Manushi*, *Aadhi Zameen*, *Stree-sangharsh*, *Nari-mukti Sangharsh* and many others publications are available. *Aadhi Zameen* and *Nari-mukti Sangharsh* are published by the radical left women's organisations. Activists from autonomous feminist organisations from Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Kerala have now started writing about their own struggle experiences. The number of conferences, workshops, seminars organized among this section grew fast during 1990s.

There are three exceptional studies about anti-feudal struggle during 1940s: on Telangana by Sundarrayya (1972), on Warli revolt by Parulekar (1975), and on Tebhaga by Chakravarty (1980). These works narrate and analyse the nature and extent of female participation in these struggles but fail to produce an in-depth assessment of what this participation actually implied for women. The rich experience of peasant movements (Desai, 1985; Frank and Fuentes, 1987) is of great importance in this context. Neera

Desai (1977, 1981), Kanak Mukherjee (1989), and Radha Kumar (1989, 1995) are some of the authors who wrote about women's movement in India. Roy (1995) and Lalitha (1989) have studied women's participation in peasant struggles.

The 1970s witnessed a series of mass struggles in many parts of the country. Agarwal (1989) has listed their main features in the context of women's grassroots responses as follows:

- A growing recognition that originated before 1970s, in many groups and organisations of the rural poor, of the need to take cognizance of gender issues, typically articulated via women's committees in these organisations;
- Emergence of a large number of grassroots, non-party initiatives involving tribal, dalit, poor, and especially women in these communities around issues such as land, wages, upper-caste oppression and ecology;
- Emergence of separate women's groups; and
- The focus on poor women's specific concerns in the women's association linked to the left-wing political parties.

Some micro-studies about the grassroots experiences of women resistance to the socio-economic inequalities and destruction of nature, that provide serious insights into the politics of organising women, and their responses to poverty and patriarchy are: Bodh Gaya movement in Bihar (Manimala, 1984) reported in Manushi; Shahada movement in Maharashtra (Savara and Gathoskar, 1982); VCI movement in Tamilnadu (Burnad, 1983); CROSS movement in Andhra Pradesh (Mies et al, 1983); Chipko movement (Bandopadhyay and Shiva, 1987; Dogra, 1984; Jain, 1984; Joshi, 1983; Women's Against Arrack in Andhra Pradesh (Anveshi, 1993).

Patel (1991) argues that women's movement in its attempt to define the women's question in the context of the space it has carved out, advocates two intellectual trends. One, locates the problems in the experiences of women involved in mainly urban based groups drawing their support from middle class segments of the society; orienting themselves to the problems of middle class women; and articulating questions focussing on 'women in the family'. And, the other locates the problems in the experiences of women active in mass struggle; which focus on the survival issues concerning both men and women expressing 'class demands'.

Irina Sen (1990) adds one more dimension to this view point by making a distinction between the mass movements led by the traditional left parties and the non-traditional left groups. She states that the former is very distrustful of an open analysis of patriarchal dominance and its ideologues have openly accused feminists of attempting to break-up working class solidarity through an injection of 'irrelevancies' such as women's oppression issues into straightforward class struggles. The experience of the later category, however, opens up newly constructed avenues for defining women's problems.

Sen (ibid) points to the evolving of a specific women's view point over last two decade course of women's participation in mass struggles led by the non-traditional left groups. She argues that an understanding of the nature and experience of these struggles is important for developing a perspective on the women's movement. Such a perspective could be more truly representative of the aspirations of the common Indian women than most currently available feminist theories. The peasant struggle has never been just for bread but also for human dignity – dignity of women having been occupying quite often central place. The success in the one depended on the success in the other. Strategic issues such as, mobilisation process (Kishwar, 1988) question of alliance between the landless labourer's and middle peasant's organisations (Ray and Jha, 1987); relationship between autonomous women's movement and mass movement (Sen, 1989b) have been taken up. Kishwar (op. cit) argues that the transformation of mobilisation into a movement is a much more 'strategically' organised process. She, however, ignores the contemporary historical evidences of transformation of mobilisation into the movement as 'spontaneous process' - the most glaring example of which has been the Naxalbari peasant movement (see Chapters 5 and 11 below).

There are volumes of gender-neutral writings and studies (Sinha, 1973-92; Gupta, 1982; Sengupta, 1982; Das, 1983-90; Devnathan, 1990; Prasad, 1975-1991; Bharti, 1988-1991; Sinha and Sinha, 1996, Sinha, 1998 and many others) on different aspects of Naxalbari movement and these studies cannot be said to be lacking 'gender-sensitivity', though with a conventional approach<sup>19</sup>. Yet, no serious attempt to write the historiography of the Naxalbari movement from a women's perspective is made so far. A documentation of women's participation in Naxalbari movement in two central Bihar districts has been attempted by Kelkar (1988), who argues that despite their heroic participation women were not given due recognition and class subsumed gender during initial phase of the movement. Another document is the historiography (1986) of the CPI-ML (Liberation)

movement in Bihar, which presents a conventional analysis of women's participation in the movement.

Ranadive (1988) has presented a comprehensive analysis of what may be termed as the 'destructive' potential of feminist movement as the breaker of the working class solidarity – one of the established positions of the traditional left, in India, about the feminist movement. Sen (1989a) has offered an equally powerful critique to this study and initiated a discourse over the tactical issues, which the traditional left and the feminist movement need to resolve for evolving as 'comrades' instead of 'antagonists'.

Another established position of the traditional left is - women's liberation cannot be achieved without eliminating other forms of oppression and inequality. The converse, that the elimination of other forms of oppression would not automatically eliminate gender inequalities is not yet recognised by the traditional left. While gender is linked to the other forms of oppressions, it also has its specificity that needs study and understanding so as to lead to evolution of forms of mobilisation that will liberate both women and others.

Sen raises a question - does official Marxists want to say that these struggles are not justified? Or, do they want Indian women to shelve these demands until the left structures become capable of shouldering the complete responsibility for voicing them? Sen argues that WSs is not a separatist demand, as the official left perceives, but plea to examine the ways of the societal processes coloured by the gender dimension.

The issue of an autonomous women's movement is yet to resolve. To what extent can women in a highly stratified society be mobilised on common issues? Given the deep class and caste contradictions in the society can women cross these chasms? What are the common issues? Do they have the same meaning - share and property rights for middle peasant women are vastly different from the right to land for a landless labour woman. For the solidaristic feminism to reach across deep-rooted dividing lines, the efforts have to be made to ameliorate the condition of women located in the bottom strata, and to forge alliance for a broad-based social movement that takes explicit account of the class and caste dimensions of most gender issues.

While Bardhan (1993) takes precisely above position, Omvedt (1986) put thrust over autonomous women's organisation revealing clear preference for 'gender' subordinating caste / class and other local conditions. She gives a new dimension to the term 'autonomy' in the context of women's organisation: it is 'to continue the pressure to

democratise the functioning of mass organisations and simultaneously, raising issues relevant to women even if these go against the narrow immediate interests of men connected with parties or their mass organisations.

Omvedt (1993) claims to have evolved a new feminist perspective that poses challenge to the traditional Marxism and traditional feminism both in its own ways and goes beyond the simple posing of 'class and gender', or 'class and caste', with the emergence of new women's organisations linked to mass organisations. The emergence of women's organisations within the Naxalbari movement could be seen in the same context though the nature of their 'autonomy' is different.

Given cultural diversity and complexities of class / caste / ethnicity and urban / rural divide could we actually speak of an overarching women's movement in India? Akerker (1995) offers an answer to this question in a 'discursive' practice that needs to be adopted by the women's movement. Dietrich (1996) advocating a humanist approach suggests women's movement need to identify its involvement in the production and protection of life as dalits, as women, and to incorporate this collective history in the struggle for production and sustenance of life. Agarwal (1996) observes that women's militancy is more closely linked to family survival issues than men's. This provides added feed back for making strong case for a women's perspective for mass struggle.

An upsurge in WSs body of literature in India was witnessed in mid-80s onwards attempting to reappropriate traditionally acquired women's spaces via reinterpreting myths, epics, mainstream religious and cultural texts or practices and search for alternative texts or practices. One sub-trend of this process attempted to discover the historical methods of women's 'resistance' in India in a bid to write feminine historiography of mass struggles. Three historiographies of Telangana (Lalitha et al, 1984), Warli (Saldana, 1986), and Tebhaga (Custers, 1986) are noteworthy. These studies highlight the lower level of gender consciousness of the Communist Party of India<sup>22</sup> (CPI henceforth), which failed to address the issue of gender oppression adequately in the course of these struggles. The studies also highlight the active participation of rural poor women in these struggles, who themselves felt and located the lack of gender-sensitivity of the CPI leadership during struggle.

The *Stree Shakti Sanghatana*<sup>23</sup> has recorded the life stories (Lalitha, 1989) of women comrades of Telangana movement. The emphasis of this historiography is on assessing

women's role and contributions to the movement from their own viewpoint. This book is a marked shift from other historiographies as it explores history seen through the eyes of women, judged and defined by their values. For women, joining the movement marked a deep sense and enormous advance in their personal liberation and political consciousness. To them, coming into public political action was as if they had stepped out<sup>24</sup> of the boundaries that defined their space in the private family world. It is, however, surprising that their accounts have little reference to the public aspects of the Telangana armed struggle; are strangely episodic and many of them visualise the 'betrayal' of the withdrawal of movement only in personal terms, or as a woman, and not as a party worker or from the view point of Telangana peasantry (Sen, 1989b).

The WSs has been exploring what may be termed as the 'women's worldview' through emphasising the need to hear the voices of women. Karlekar (1991) has discovered a record of fifty autobiographies and autobiographical sketches having been written by *Bengali* women between 1876-1970. Koshambi (1992) has discovered a 'radical feminist' in 19th century Maharashtra and Bhagat (1995) explored Marathi literature as a source for contemporary feminism. Geetha (1998) has rediscovered *pariyar* movement and testimonies of female leaders of Vedchi, Telangana, and Tebhaga struggles (Mitra, 1998) are also published recently.

## **5. TOWARDS CHANGING THE HISTORY OF THE RULING GENDER**

The expanding of the 'gender' in development areas opened up diverse avenues for enquiry into the issues ranging from market led development to ecology; from production to reproduction; from modern scientific knowledge to traditional wisdom; and from sustenance to the sources of knowledge – all approached through a gender perspective. Even the neo-classical economics, as the theoretical underpinning of the mainstream development as well as science and methodology has to encounter gender criticism. The concepts of economics defined within market framework are radically challenged by the eco-feminists.

### **5.1 Gender Critique to Neo-classical Economics, Market, Development**

Feminism and market are not congenial bedfellows! (Krishnaraj, 1998)

The bourgeois economics has played a central role in the evolution of development studies and in the formulation of development policy. Agarwal, Krishnaraj, Dewan, Sen,

Bhatta and many others have presented gender critique to neo-classical economics and market.

Dewan (1995) argues that the neo-classical economics accepted as the mainstream economics, the most 'scientific' of all social sciences, does not have much to offer either conceptually or methodologically in terms of gender. Sharma (1994) argues that most of the discussions on economic policies do not link economic issues organically with political, cultural, and environmental issues. Therefore, a need to develop systematic and scientific analytical linkages between the mode of production and the mode of reproduction, for examining the social reality and endeavouring the economic activities is strongly advocated by the scholars (Sharma, 1994; Dewan, 1995; Krishnaraj, 1988b and many others) as well as the practioners (Bhatta, 1998).

Krishnaraj (1988b) argues that economics as a science fails as tools as well as methodology because it has swept the entire range of activities related to human survival where women are invisible and work hard for the society. These activities are neither counted nor valued, because they are beyond the sphere of economics and outside the market and the cash nexus. If all the work women do in home moved out into the market, the parameters of supply and demand, upon which the market value is based would change. In India, where a major portion of economic activity is still non-monetized, the theories (of economics) evolved in industrial-commercial societies can neither capture nor accommodate the features of societies that vastly differ. Sharma (1994) also emphasises the need to explore the gender aspects of natural resource use and management in diverse contexts, because the logic of market does not take into account women's contribution as producer and reproducer of life and livelihood.

Pointing to the relationship between the economy and ecology, Shiva (1991) argues that market-oriented development framework renders economy and ecology as contradictory, while both converge in the survival economies of the third world poor. She advocates for a transformation of economics from a process of commodity production for profit maximization into the prudent resource management for sustenance.

Amartya Sen (1981) also posits that market does not take into account the 'real costs' to society through environmental degradation and fails in dealing with other kind of social deprivations. Ecology movements seriously challenge the concept of economics and politics defined within market framework. The 'right to life and livelihood', he suggests, is



a wider concept of economy and is linked to issues of resources, ethics, equity and justice.

Ela Bhatta (1998) through her experience with the SEWA movement sums up that laws of economics operate in social reality and society cannot be reduced to market. She argues that social capital is the basis on which economic capital can have a stable and sustained growth.

## **5.2 Ecology Critique to Development**

According to the eco-feminist and feminine principle positions, the mainstream ideology of development is based on a vision of bringing all natural resources into the market economy for commodity production. Therefore, in market economy, the organising principle for natural resource-use is profit-maximization and capital accumulation. Nature and human needs both are managed through market mechanisms. Jain (1990) argues that the undergrowth (or overgrowth) has the cumulative destructive pressures that have been mounted by development on the territory of the poor. The inequity of various kinds has been perpetrated and soil, water, trees, productive opportunities; rights, institutions, cultural resources and much else that provided the support system for the underclass has been encroached upon, under the garb of development. Such affirmation of findings whether at local level or moving to national level to the international, led to the feminist critique of the conventional ideologies from the perspective of development.

The process of 'reclamation' culminated into serious concern for reconstruction of the contemporary history of human society from women's perspectives and ecological movement has shown the way. Shiva, Mies, Agarwal, Krishnaraj, Bardhan, Datar, Omvedt, Deitrich and many other scholars and activists have contributed to the reconstruction approach in their own way. In spite of their different persuasions, all converge on the point that the approach of 'conquering nature' needs to be replaced by one that is in consonance with nature including human species that form part of the nature.

The most important contribution of the 'reclamation' process - the rediscovery of the feminine principle (Shiva, 1989) views women and nature as intimately related and therefore, their domination and liberation as similarly linked. Indian women engaged in

survival struggles, leading ecology movements, are simultaneously engaged in protection and conservation of nature. Mies' work (1986) though known as an 'eco-feminist' enquiry into the global capitalism is a powerful eco-Marxist<sup>25</sup> critique to global capitalist development as well.

Shiva (1989) argues that the commercial forestry, promoted as scientific forestry by the narrow interests exemplified by the western patriarchy is reductionist<sup>26</sup> in intellectual content and ecological impact and generates poverty for those whose livelihoods and productivity depend on the forests. Agarwal (1989) critique development strategy as extractive / destructive of nature rather than conserving / regenerative, which does not take into account the long-term complementarities between agriculture and natural resource preservation.

Bardhan (1989) points towards the severe environmental impact of commercial enterprises as well as disintegration of livelihood systems by development projects. Development has not only disintegrated life-styles and mutual- support systems of many formerly self-reliant communities, but also created severe hardship and survival crisis for the land-poor women. Their hard pressed lives mean hardship for their daughters, crafted earlier than the age to help in the burdensome tasks, thus deprived of their childhood and education. Therefore, it has an inter-generational effect.

While Shiva views the link between women and ecology as 'naturally culminated', Agarwal (1996) views it as 'socially and culturally constructed'. The gender perspective argues that women's and men's relationship with nature needs to be understood as rooted in their material reality, in their specific forms of interaction with the environment. Guha (1988) makes a distinction between the social base of the environmental movement and its articulate leadership, i.e. the 'public' and 'private' faces of Indian environmentalism which blatantly appears to be tribal movement - the way it is articulated by its leaders. He argues that a large segment of the environmental movement is, in fact, peasant movement. Peasant women, historically, have been the resource managers although this has received scant attention in environmental debate. Peasant women<sup>27</sup> identified the core issues affecting their livelihood, such as land degradation, poor maintenance of land records, deforestation, problem of water resource management, interrelationship between environment and social change, nature and role of collective action in strengthening women's voices in local decision-making processes and need to

recover, expand and redefine women's traditional rights with greater security and tenure for resource use (CWDS, 1991).

### 5.3 Gender and Ecology Critique to Science and Source of Knowledge

Shiva (1989) views modern science as a 'consciously gendered' patriarchal project and Mies (1986) shows violent antipathy to science. The gender perspective mediates these extremist positions. Agarwal (1996) argues that the issue is not modern science in itself but the process whereby the 'scientific knowledge' is generated and applied, and the fruits of this application are distributed. For instance, Agarwal (ibid) illustrates - the green revolution technology embodies a technological mix that assigns primacy to laboratory - based research and manufactured inputs and treats agriculture as an isolated production system. The indiscriminate agricultural expansion with little attempt to maintain a balance between forests, field and grazing lands assume that the relationship between agriculture, forests and village commons is an antagonistic rather than a complementary one. A scientific vision with no respect for nature's need and a development vision for no respect for people's needs inevitably threatens survival, therefore, an alternative scientific vision sensitive to the nature and sustenance needs to be evolved.

A similar vision is needed for the alternative technology, which according to Krishnaraj (1988a; 1998) would not be the low material cost or small scale but one that minimises human cost and maximises human welfare.

Knowledge is the extension of consciousness (Maslow, in Colin, 1979). Going by this approach WSs is 'knowledge' as an extension of feminist consciousness. The WSs has the potential to provide an alternative vision for the construction of knowledge that may apply to all oppressed people (Krishnaraj, ibid). Dietrich (1996), Kabeer (1994), Shiva (1989), Mies (1986) and many others offer the feminist critique to sources of Knowledge.

Women (and common people) have been almost absent in the construction of the universal<sup>28</sup> knowledge and knowledge systems. Dietrich (1996) argues that Indian society has to face a situation of conflicting<sup>29</sup> knowledge systems. The culture of sustaining life within the traditional knowledge system was mainly internalised by women and lower caste people, who remained primarily responsible for subsistence labour in the household as well as in agriculture.

Women's movement, to a considerable extent, interacts with the life-sustaining traditional knowledge systems<sup>30</sup>, which are highly situation specific and require an intimate knowledge of the culture background. The universal knowledge system imbibes the aspirations of equality, opportunity, visions of a less oppressive life and it is this democratic contents of 'universal values', which often contributes to co-opt women, especially in the NGO sector, into a niche of the total market (Dietrich, *ibid*).

## 6. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

Women in struggle have been defining development as a process, as participation, as the choices born out of their life-experiences. Their wisdom and visions have been recognised by some feminist scholars and activists, who have been engaged in developing alternative development perspectives.

Shiva and Mies (1993) offer **Subsistence versus Development** perspective as an alternative to the existing development paradigm. The 'subsistence' perspective assigns women and children prior place with a focus over the basic wherewithal of survival. Subsistence does not mean stagnation, argues Datar (1995), this instead requires new technologies as well as skills in soil generation, water management, and natural agriculture, artisanal production that would not only sustain but also enhance productivity.

Dietrich (1996) offers **Production of life and livelihood** as an alternative perspective. This conceptualization, she argues, is not new in itself as it goes back to the early writings of Marx<sup>31</sup>. Reversing Marxian preference for 'production', Dietrich argues that if production of life and livelihood is understood as the basic production process without which extended production process is not thinkable, it become obvious that any production process which destroys the life world and the resource base for survival is ultimately self-defeating.

Agarwal (1996) offers **Feminist environmentalism** as an alternative perspective, which is 'transformational', in nature and links development, redistribution and ecology in mutually regenerative ways. This would necessitate complex and interrelated changes, such as in the 'composition' of what is produced, the 'technologies' used to produce it, the

'processes' by which decisions on products and technologies are arrived at, the knowledge systems on which such choices are based, and the class and gender 'distribution' of products and tasks.

Jain (1996) advocates a 'reordering of development' and planning method acceptable to women. The planning method has to recharacterise the social and economic characteristics to reveal its positive creativity and then set out goals building on the predominant features.

Bhatta (1992) offers an alternative development perspective based on 'bargaining from below' and centred round 'restructuring and reordering' of local power structures which would snowball into a process of change towards greater empowerment of women and would effect macro-economic processes.

Dreze and Sen (1996) offer a 'people-centred' approach to development, which puts 'human agency' (women agency being a part of this) rather than organisations such as markets or governments, at the centre stage. Expanding the view of economic development, they focus human capabilities, which is seen in terms of expanding social opportunities.

India Human Development Report (1999) defines development as a 'process of increasing people's choices'. The report argues that development and better standards of living are not only ends in themselves but essential inputs for promoting economic growth and development. They are the dominant routes for intergenerational transfers that ensure the future growth of a country.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The WSs in its three-decade endeavour of changing the contemporary history of the ruling gender, in India, has evolved from a WID perspective to gender perspective and from a feminist 'rebel' to a feminine 'principle'. It is the over-arching 'feminine' which now appears to be culminating into what I term as women's worldview (WWV). Human history has been the history of the ruling gender, because hitherto it is the men's worldview that has dominated the fate of the human race (and other species as well on the globe). What I precisely mean by the women's worldview is not gender-seclusion. It is neither

gender-neutrality nor the de-genderisation of thoughts, actions, and strategies for change. The women's worldview is a worldview that can reveal the facts, truths, concepts, ideas, propositions, assumptions and so on seen, experienced, felt, and realised from women's eyes. Women's worldview is women's perception of world. This is not contradictory (to men's world) vision. This, instead aims at complementing and correcting the 'falsified' notions of not only gender relations but of the whole set of ideas and exercises related to development, in particular, and human well being, in general. The human worldview is reduced to what Bruner's (1983) concept of 'basic story'<sup>32</sup> is. A women's worldview aims at making this 'story' complete, integrated, and holistic. It begins from a common woman's eyes and a 'common' Indian woman is a poor peasant woman, an agricultural labour woman, and a casual woman worker. A common Indian woman is a nurturer, provider, and pivot of the family. The creation of such a feminine history will be the beginning of the human history, because the history of the ruling gender hitherto has remained the 'pre-human history'.

## **PART – II**

### **THE SETTING, EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY**

With this Part, I enter the setting - the state of Bihar. 'Where' (Chapter Five) and 'how' (Chapter Six) this study has been conducted, i.e. the setting and the whole process of making of this thesis is described in this part.

The dominant change that has occurred between early 1970s to late 1990s is change in power relations between privileged and unprivileged groups as well as between the genders in the rural society. The new power relationships are expressed in terms of social networking and resource profile maintenance for transactions and markets through different social, cultural, economic and political means and sharing of all these by women across all classes in different ways and varied forms, in some parts. In some other, this is expressed in terms of direct conflicts between privileged and unprivileged groups, often leading to a mutual agreement between the conflicting parties over the issues involved. Women across all classes directly or indirectly experience and share this whole conflicting situation. These two distinct expressions of power relations may be seen as representative expressions in north and central Bihar regions, respectively. A diverse analysis of these processes giving way to two distinct responses to the new technology, emanating from two distinct agrarian settings and social, political and cultural contexts in Bihar, is attempted separately (In Parts - III and IV below).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **BIHAR: RESOLVING THE CONFLICTS THROUGH MARKET AND MOBILISATION**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter takes into the setting - the state of Bihar. Located in the upper half, leftward, on the map of India (Map -1), Bihar is often termed as the 'heart' of the country. This geographical location alone, however, does not suffice if the state would have been deprived of the intense political sensitivity that really symbolizes this heart, beat. Bihar is blessed with enormous natural endowments that can make a small 'developed' region feel envious. The state owns about seven and a half percent of the total geographical area of the country, with an exceptionally cultivable and highly fertile land in proportion to its total area. The proportionately higher rainfall, abundant ground and surface water potential, enormous mineral resources and hard working populace - all that could make a region and its inhabitants prosperous. Nevertheless, Bihar presents a classic example of 'poverty amidst plenty'.

Another common observation 'labels' the state as an intransigent society. This is partly true, yet requires valid contexts and interpretations. Bihar has witnessed substantial structural change over last three decades. The content and forms of these changes are outcome of the dynamic relations between different groups and classes that constitute the rural society. The intrusion of the new technology has acted as a 'catalyst' in this overall process, though hard-core 'data-enslaved' economists often project it as the sole 'factor'. This, at least, suggests that Bihar is not change-resistant.

The dominant change that has occurred during the stipulated period (early 1970s to late 1990s) is change in power relations between the privileged and the unprivileged groups of the rural society. Another significant change has occurred in the arena of power relations between the privileged and the underprivileged genders. This has tempered the



prevailing power structure hitherto in favour of a small group of resourceful people, mainly men.

The new power relationship is expressed in terms of social networking and resource profile maintenance for transactions and markets through different social, cultural, economic and political means and sharing of all these by women across all the classes in different ways and varied forms, in some parts. In some other, this is expressed in terms of direct conflict between the privileged and the unprivileged groups, often leading to a mutual agreement between the conflicting parties over the issues involved. Women across all the classes directly or indirectly experience and share this whole conflicting situation. These two distinct expressions of power relations may be seen as representative expressions in north and central regions, respectively. These are two distinct responses to the new technology that emanate from two distinct agrarian settings and social, political and cultural contexts in Bihar.

This chapter provides a background for the empirical sites – Purnea and Jahanabad - in north and central Bihar respectively, a diverse analysis of which is attempted (in Parts III and IV below) respectively. I have organised this chapter into five sections below. The theme is discussed in section two. Section three offers the contrasting features of north and central regions of Bihar in demographic, physiographic and historical-cultural contexts. This is followed by a brief description of the process of structural change over the period (1947-1965), a period that created some material conditions for the new technology to intrude the rural setting. In sections four and five, I explore north Bihar as a site of 'resolving the conflicts' through market and central Bihar, through radical mobilisation, respectively. In section six, a new set of concepts evolved at the grassroots is introduced. This is important for two reasons: first, this process of 'theorisation from below' challenges the continued characterisation of Bihar as a 'semi-feudal' agrarian economy, which still predominates academic perception; and second, it offers a more realistic explanation of the issues, which does not suffer from excessive academisation of the grassroots realities. In a way, this process rebels against the hegemonic tendency of academia that treats theorisation as their exclusive preserve. I conclude with a brief comment over how this new set of concepts has the potential to allow more space to women, hitherto 'excluded' in studies about production modes in India.

## 2. RESOLVING THE CONFLICTS: THE THEME

The economists in the context of Bihar have adequately explored the significance of the new technology in taking the 'forces of production' to a higher stage, but the process of interaction between the 'forces of production' and the prevailing 'relations of production' has not been studied so much. The new technology was 'intrusion' and 'intrusion' leads to conflicts. Deviating from a conventional analysis, I approach Bihar as a site of conflict between the 'productive forces' and the 'production relations'.

The new technology instilled new 'forces of production' into an agrarian setting which was yet to undergo substantial institutional changes and which, in this process could have subsequently led to change in the 'relations of production'. While, the first process went apace in the countryside, the second process remained vitiated. This led to serious conflicts between the two processes. This conflict is expressed in terms of conflicts between different groups and social classes of the rural society; most sharply reflected between the rich and the poor; the privileged and the unprivileged.

I have argued elsewhere (Sinha and Sinha, 1996) that this conflict between the 'forces of production' and the 'relations of production' has remained the root cause of the ongoing socio-economic conflict expressed in militant social movement in Bihar. Here, I argue that while this conflict appears to have been resolved via cooperation and social networking between different social classes in north Bihar, in central Bihar, this appears to have been resolved through militant class-based mobilisation of the poor.

The conflicting interaction between the modern productive forces and the traditional production relations had two dominant outcomes<sup>1</sup>, which consequently led to two distinct 'models' to develop in north and central regions of Bihar. In the north, the anti-feudal radical mobilisation (contemporary to the technological intrusion) by the poor threatened the feudal forces and the state machinery to the extent to take up partial implementation of land-reform laws, yet it could not sustain so strong<sup>2</sup> as to significantly dislodge the feudal system and radically alter the production relations. The poor gained very little in return and in absence of a sustained struggle for getting more they were left with no option but to 'escape' from their root for a livelihood. To them, out migration to distant labour markets emerged as the 'rescue' point.

In central Bihar, the feudal stronghold was structurally<sup>3</sup> weaker. The strong mobilisation of big tenants as well as poor *bataidars* (share croppers) during 1930s and 40s further weakened the feudal order. The mobilisation continued after the legal abolition of *zamindari* during 1950s as well. Obviously, it was easier (than the north) to 'target' the weaker feudal order in central Bihar. The poor gained substantially and not in economic terms alone. Here, 'struggle' offered an option to survive with dignity.

Why is it through mobilisation that the unprivileged groups in central Bihar prefer to 'struggle' hard at home, instead of 'escaping' from their roots, as is the situation in the north? The incidence of migration is very low in former region while it is very high in the latter. Why could north Bihar not sustain mobilisation even during its militant phase and why did central Bihar repeatedly became its bastion, many reasons (political economic, in particular) are offered to explain this. However, one 'unexplored' reason appears to lie in cultural factors as well, which explain the north as 'accommodative' and the central as 'resistant'. The historical-cultural contexts (3.3 below) of these two distinct societies deserve attention to pursue further analysis and examine the nature of liberation options for women (and men) in both the regions.

### **3. THE NORTH-CENTRAL CONTRAST**

The north and the central regions of Bihar have many contrasting features, ranging from physiographic characteristics to historical-cultural contexts and political cultures to agrarian structures. This reflects to some extent in demographic features as well. All these have cumulative effect upon the populace as well as the social, economic and political processes.

### 3.1 Physiography

Extending over 173877 square Kms., the total geographical area of the state can broadly be divided into two regions - the Gangetic basin, which covers slightly bigger half of the total area and the Chhotanagpur plateau, which envelops the smaller half. As the river *Ganga* traverses the state, the Gangetic basin can be sub-divided into two - the continuous plains made of new alluvial soil that covers the expanded north Bihar, north to the river; and the smaller southern basin made of the old alluvial soil, that covers the area south to the river. Since, the south basin is centrally located between the north plains and the south Bihar plateau, this region is called central Bihar.

The new alluvial soil of the north plains has enormous water retaining capacity. The central Bihar plains contain little water retaining capacity making the region better drained than the north, which gets ravaged by floods every year. The average rainfall in Bihar plains varies from above 1400 mm in the northeast to 1000 mm in the southwest fringe of the state. Purnea and Jahanabad lie in the northeast and southwest regions respectively (MAP 2).

The north Bihar plain is elevated towards north and the central Bihar plain has a southward slope. The former is a high water table region with rich riverine system and the latter, a low water table region with the single *Sone* (river) canal network constructed about a century ago and collapsed (Bharti, 1989d) now due to lack of maintenance. These distinct topographies have led to evolve different kind of indigenous systems of water resource management for irrigation.

### 3.2 Demographic Profile: Bihar, Purnea, Jahanabad

The mid-year population estimates projected by the EPW Research Foundation (EPW, 1996) put the population of Bihar at 9,88,20,900 in 1997. The Expert Group's poverty estimates (Mahapatra, 1996) put the number of rural poor in Bihar at 4,50,86,000 - means, if the number of the urban poor is added about half of the total populace stand as poor. The sex ratio is 911 (rural - 968 and urban - 893) below the national average (932) as per the 1991 census (Appendix 5). Yet it is much higher than Punjab (882) revealed in a recent survey<sup>4</sup> conducted by an NGO, the reason for which is traced in alarming incidence of femicide!

Taking guideline from the UNDP's 'capability poverty measure' (CPM) the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has prepared the CPM for 14 Indian States. For Bihar, the CPM figure is 65.6 percent (52.3 percent for India). Bihar ranks second lowest, in terms of micro level Gender Development Measure (GDM) and sixth, in terms of macro level constructed by Hirway and Mahadevia (1996) for 15 Indian states.

The India HDR (1999) also puts Bihar among one of the most backward<sup>5</sup> states. The Human Development Index (HDI) for the state is 34 falling under the lowest<sup>6</sup> HDI index-range. Bihar falls under the lowest category<sup>7</sup> of 'female work participation rate' (FWPR) as well with only 19 percent (26 for India) taking together 'usual' and 'subsidiary' both the work statuses.

Purnea constitutes 1.85 percent (3229 sq. km) of the total area of the state yet it shares 2.17 percent (1878885) of the total populace and 2.47 percent (346442) of the total households accommodated within the boundaries of Bihar. These corresponding figures for Jahanabad are 0.90 percent (1569 sq. km), 1.36 percent (1174900) and 1.18 percent (165393) respectively. The population density for Purnea is 582 and for Jahanabad 749, much higher than the state average (497).

The sex ratio is 903 for Purnea and 919 for Jahanabad. The former's sex ratio is below the state average (910) while the latter's is above it. The general literacy is lower at 22.38 percent than the state average (30.56) in Purnea, while it is higher for Jahanabad with 37 percent. Female literacy is lower at 13.06 percent in Purnea than the state average (18), while it is higher in Jahanabad with 22.43. These comparative demographic features highlight the obvious position of Jahanabad in relation to Purnea and Bihar as a whole in terms of sex ratio and literacy status - both being the important human development indices. It is, however, interesting to note that the average family size in Purnea is smaller with 5.4 members, while it is larger in Jahanabad with 7.1.

The percentage of the main workforce (out of the total) that directly or indirectly depends on agriculture is 89.73 (35.2 as cultivators and 54.53 as agricultural labourers) in Purnea. This corresponding figure for Jahanabad is 86.74 (43 as cultivator and 43.74 as labourer) and for Bihar is 80.70 (43.57 as cultivator and 37.13 as labourer). The female participation percentage to the main workforce in Purnea is 39 (8 as cultivator and 31 as

labourer), in Jahanabad 40.66 (9.76 as cultivator and 30.9 as labourer) and in Bihar 37.19 (11.61 as cultivator and 25.58 as labourer). A marked percentage gap (20) between the cultivator and labourer categories with a very high percentage of labourer (54.53) in Purnea is revealing. This gap is negligible in Jahanabad with 0.74 percent. For Bihar, this gap is 6.5 percent.

### **3.3 The Historical-Cultural Context<sup>8</sup>**

The present day north Bihar, at its zenith in Vaishali, was the first ever seat of the democratic republican form of political system. And, the present day central Bihar, the epicentre of the Magadh empire, by contrast, was the first ever imperial form of political system that grew during ancient phase of the Indian history<sup>9</sup>. The Vaishali and Patna (Pataliputra) of the ancient days, therefore, represented two contrasting socio, cultural, economic and political structures.

Magadh was endowed with relatively less (than the north) fertile tracts and deprived of natural riverine system. It had high population density with hard-working populace and enormous natural mining resources like iron, just at its southeastern fringe. The empire grew and flourished for centuries to come after the vast mineral resources were annexed through aggression. The imperial rule for centuries led the region to develop into an aggressive militant society.

The structure of ancient village settlements in both the regions symbolised their respective cultures, the remnants of which could still be found. For instance, in north Bihar, one can still find big villages - expanded, scattered, usually situated along main roads. Big residential houses with expanded windows, ventilators and doors - featuring a community managed inhabitation symbolising a peace loving harmonious society with no sense of 'insecurity' and fear can still be traced. In central Bihar, the villages are smaller, houses often smaller and multi-layered; windows and doors narrow - often closed and congested – the whole structure like a self-sufficient protected unit, reminding one of old 'fortresses', symbolizing 'fear', 'insecurity', war-strategic pattern of inhabitation. One can still note that any of the old villages are hardly situated along main roads; the roads instead end up in a village.

The ancient Bihar was 'pioneer' in accommodating two dialectical cultures, the remnants of which can still be observed. For instance, one can still find north Bihari people as soft and sophisticated in behaviour with culturally ingrained submissive temperament. In central Bihar, the cultural sophistication may be found significantly 'absent'. Intransigent and outspoken temperament may be treated as 'normal'.

The central Bihar has historically maintained an anti-thetical culture in all spheres of life. Brahminical order has never been so powerful in this region as it remained in north. This had a positive impact on position of women in society. Female education level is usually higher (than in north). One can still observe a special status assigned to daughters in the families upholding traditional values. Married daughters are treated as 'special' guests and their children get more respect (than son's children).

How Brahminical order was grounded to dust in this region is most evident from a historical fact that the successive rulers of Magadh empire were **non-kshatriya**<sup>10</sup>. Radical religious movements against the Brahminical order, for instance, Buddhism followed by Jainism, were launched in this region. Magadh became the bastion of as many as 83 sects of Buddhism and Jainism along with other anti-Brahminical traditions like Kabirpanth<sup>11</sup> during Mughal age. The anti-thetical culture of Magadh was treated in Vaishali, the follower of the strong Brahminical orders in such a contemptuous manner that they had declared Magadh as '**Vratya pradesh**<sup>12</sup>' (land of the uncivilised people).

The colonial history provides further evidence for this cultural distinction. While for central Bihar, one can find series of evidence for 'confrontation' with the colonial rule, north Bihar provides very few. While the biggest landlord of Bihar, the *Maharaja* of Darbhanga (in north) along with many other landlords 'collaborated' with the colonial rule, the small landlord like Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur (in central Bihar) inflicted decisive<sup>13</sup> war.

Inner conflicts and power consciousness in society are not as pronounced in the north, as it is in central Bihar. For instance, conflicts among the landlords on the issue of use of community managed water resources remained in Jahanabad a live issue until *zamindari* was abolished. In 1930s the concerted efforts for 'sanskritisation'<sup>14</sup> were carried on in central Bihar. Even before, the powerful peasant movement led by the Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha (BPKS henceforth) grew in the militant lap of central Bihar. The powerful *bataidari* movement in Purnea (in north Bihar) was launched by the *Santhal*<sup>15</sup> the

immigrant tribes from the eastern part of central Bihar. It was, instead thwarted by the local *bataidars*.

The present expression of this cultural distinction between the two regions can be understood from the fact that after *zamindari* abolition, peasant movement led by the socialist and the communist parties remained strong in central Bihar with a few exceptions in the north, such as the CPI led movement in Madhubani. Though Naxalite movement broke out first in Muzaffarpur (in north Bihar) it could not sustain<sup>16</sup> there for long. This grew, expanded, and sustained in central Bihar (see 5.3).

### 3.4 Transfer of Power and Arithmetic of Land Reforms

The agrarian structure in Bihar was a complex legacy of colonial and pre-colonial interactions, just after the transfer of power. The static picture of this was marked by the *zamindars* (landlords) - both absentee and tenure-holders - with their superior property rights in land at its apex, followed by *raiya*s (tenants) and sub-tenants acquiring middle position and *bataidar* (sharecroppers) and *mazdoor* (agricultural labourers), at the base.

The legal abolition of *Zamindari* in 1950 did not have the kind of impact it was expected to have. While liberal legal provisions<sup>17</sup> helped *zamindars* retain their powerful class position, the complex combination of economic, social and political power also worked (Dhar, 1991) efficient to maintain their landed interests - one glaring instance of which was retention of vast tracts via benami<sup>18</sup> arrangements. The *zamindari* abolition, ceiling fixation (on land) and tenancy reforms had to face organised opposition from *zamindars*, since enactment until their 'poor' implementation (Prasad, 1993; Jannuzi, 1974; Thomer, 1976, 1980). The pressure and influence exercised by them on the state government led to serious loopholes in ceiling legislations. The National Commission on Agriculture listed 42 loopholes (Kurien, 1992:68) allowing land to be exempted from ceiling legislations in India.

The Ceiling Act<sup>19</sup> of 1961 granted higher ceilings and exemptions to the *zamindars*. The Planning Commission of India, in 1964, estimated the total surplus land between 100,000 to 150,000 acres that was possible to acquire via enforcement of the ceiling act in the state as a whole. The proponent of the ceiling legislation K B Sahay<sup>20</sup> then pungently



remarked that not a single acre would become available even if the act were strictly enforced because the ceiling act was 'shamefully' mild. The ceiling legislation was amended many times since then. With the third amendment in June 1973, the ceiling were reduced<sup>21</sup> and exemptions drastically curtailed. Another amendment<sup>22</sup> in 1986 defines 'personal cultivation' as:

Cultivation by one's labour, or his family labour or by hired labour or by servants on wage payment in cash or in kind but 'not in crop share' under personal supervision of oneself or members of the family. (quoted in Prasad, 1993)

This definition is broad enough to embrace all big landholders in Bihar as 'personal cultivators'. The overall effect of 'tenancy reforms' was to encourage non-cultivating big and medium landholders to become direct cultivators, involving large-scale eviction of tenants. A field based document prepared by the CPI in 1954 reports that within six years of *zamindari* abolition (until 1954) eviction occurred from no less than 1 million acres affecting 7 million people in the state. They were reduced to the status of a labourer because they lost their customary claims<sup>23</sup> over land they cultivated since generations. Some of them were resumed as non-occupancy tenants, usually on same plots they were alienated from. Tenancy began to be practiced on oral terms evading tenancy laws. Higher incidence of concealed<sup>24</sup> (Rao, quoted in Prasad, 1993) tenancy to the extent of 50-60 percent (Prasad, 1986) was found until late seventies.

The government of Bihar claims<sup>25</sup> to have acquired 1,419,413 acres of surplus land, of which 1,011,277 acres is claimed to be distributed until March 1995. Out of remaining 408,136 acres 152,000 are reported to be disputed. Another computing<sup>26</sup> exercise (Bharti, 1993) puts the potential surplus land at 17,766,307 acres for the state as a whole, of which 630,581.78 acres lies in north and 402,567.53 acres in central Bihar. Yet another estimate of surplus and its redistribution prepared by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) in its July, 1996 report informs that Bihar has altogether 27,700,000 acres of total cultivable land. The 'declared' surplus is 415,000 acres, of which 295,000 is redistributed among 359,000 landless - 0.82 acres per head. These estimates do not provide with an accurate position though indicate enough of inadequacy in enforcement of ceiling legislations in the state.

The process of liquidating huge land concentration and restructuring agrarian relations in 'arithmetic' terms is yet incomplete. This is further evident from the fact that a few

hundred<sup>27</sup> big landlords owning multi-hundred acres still do exist in Bihar. For instance, while *Darbhanga raj* retains 10,417 acres in the north, Bodh Gaya *math*<sup>28</sup> 9,823 acres in central Bihar as surplus, according to official sources. In central Bihar, even before Naxalite activism began, the holders of 50 acres were only a few, while in north, many occupancy *raiya*s had 40-50 acres. The government has served notice to the former in 1996 for acquiring this surplus scattered over 14 districts involving 30,000 *bataidars*. The follow up action is not known.

The simple 'arithmetic' of land reform is highly dependent on multi-dimensional institutional aspects, which has been throughout ignored in India, with the sole exception of 'Community Development Program' after *zamindari* abolition. This effort for restructuring of the institutional milieu of rural society miserably failed in Bihar. The situation is a supportive evidence to Kurien's (1992) argument that land reform, in effect, has encouraged and strengthened private ownership<sup>29</sup> in land.

### 3.5 The Structural Formation

The *zamindari* was abolished without bringing in actual tillers, viz. the *bataidar* under direct control of the state. With no provisions for their protection, the actual tillers of the soil remained deprived and tenure-holders got occupancy rights. In effect, the ownership of land was transferred to the upper layer of tenancy just below the *zamindars*.

The labouring agrarian class consisted of a combination of *bataidar* (share cropper) and *mazdoor* (agricultural labourer). The *bataidar*, while cultivating their own dwarf holdings, cultivated leased-in plots for others and in addition, supplied 'free labour' to others as well, in order to survive. The highest output per acre in Bihar (in other parts of the country as well) was achieved on these dwarf holdings (Khusro, 1964; Chattopadhyay and Rudra, 1976; Bhardwaj, 1974) then making strong case for the existence of a small peasant based production system, as the dominant production mode in India. The *mazdoor* differed from *bataidars* on two counts - the volume of labour supplied to others and the crop sharing, which the former was deprived of. The economic status of the two was not much different yet the social status made distinction as crop sharing was supposed to be socially more dignified than selling of labour.

The **middle peasantry** made its presence felt by early 1950s. Prasad (1989) argues that their emergence could be attributed to some favourable conditions. For instance, inflation of the 1940s reduced land revenue burden and reduction in drain of surplus from agriculture after the transfer of power enabled this group gain surplus. With this acquired surplus they began to redeem their mortgaged land and rapidly invested in agriculture. After *Zamindari* abolition, *zamindar* issued backdated rent receipts for their monetary considerations, which benefited this class in elevating its status from sub-tenants to tenants.

The **rich peasantry** emerged from the upper crust of agrarian hierarchy. This consisted of *ex-zamindars* and occupancy *raiyats* (tenants). *Ex-zamindar* changed their farming-management with changing environment. While many preferred leasing-out on oral terms, a fraction of this segment opted for self-cultivation via hired labour. Thorner (1980) during his field visit to Patna district in late 60s, writes about an *ex-zamindar* cultivating 125 acres via 16 '*kamiyas*' and casual labourers, in addition, during peak season. *Batai* tenancy was said to be on the wane although there used to be a lot of it in Patna district. Direct farming was so profitable that practically no one gave out land on crop-share (Thorner, 1980).

The rich peasantry thus consisted of *raiyat* and *ex-zamindar* and it was this 'combined' group, which became the vanguard of capitalist stirrings in rural Bihar. Wood (1973) argues that the role of *raiyat* was critical in the structure of exploitation in Bihar before 1950, because they represented the primary point in the system at which the surplus of the produce after consumption by themselves, their tenants and labourers was aggregated and then transmitted upward<sup>30</sup> through this medium in the form of rent. With the abolition of this system in 1950, they retained the surplus, which was previously expropriated in the form of rent from the *raiyat* thereafter, to a great extent, for self-disposal. It was this surplus, (re) invested in agriculture, which appears to have initially facilitated tenants to become the vanguard of capitalist stirring.

Besides a class analysis, it is interesting to note that it is the middle caste group, mainly *Kurmi*, *Koeri*, *Yadav*, *Dhanuk*, etc., which constitutes the best cultivators in Bihar. Their sole counterpart from upper caste group is *Bhumihar* caste. It is the rising strength of this cultivator class from middle caste groups and rich and middle peasanta from *Bhumihar*

caste, which could be almost singularly attributed to the capitalist development in Bihar. Caste status of a family acts as an important determinant for degree and nature of female labour involvement in production. For instance, in a rich farming family of *Yadav* caste in Jahanabad women may continue to be involved more directly in farming activities. This may not be seen in a *Kurmi* or *Bhumihar* rich peasant family. The reason is cultural. While, *Kurmi* caste people emulate upper caste values as their economic and social statuses rise, *Yadav* caste people do not.

The state assumed the responsibility to revitalize agriculture. Modest schemes for minor-irrigation, clearing of weed-infested areas, distribution of manures, seeds, fertilizers etc. under the 'community development program' (CDP) were undertaken. The central and the state governments undertook specific programmes for installing tube-wells, village electrification, land reclamation, protection against land erosion etc. Development of agricultural credit, marketing co-operatives and agricultural research were also paid attention. Major irrigation projects, such as *Kosi* and *Gandak* (rivers) projects were launched in north Bihar. These infra-structural investments have created favourable conditions for the new technology.

#### 4. NORTH BIHAR: RESOLVING THE CONFLICTS THROUGH MARKET

The new technology was adopted in 1965. Initially, two blocks<sup>31</sup> of western part of central Bihar with assured canal irrigation through *Sone* canal network were chosen. This 'chosen few pockets' strategy led to lopsided pattern (Prasad, 1989) of development that brought in prosperity to a few pockets as well as benefited a few social groups in rural society. This aspect has been sufficiently studied and brought into light. However, the demonstration effect of this 'pocketed development' and their social, cultural and attitudinal influences on different social groups were ignored.

The western part of central Bihar initially emerged as 'developed pockets'. Its demonstration effect spread across western and eastern parts of north Bihar. These regions had good strength of rich farmers and historical<sup>32</sup> experience of cash cropping. Nevertheless, the traditional thesis of 'advanced-backward axis'<sup>33</sup> from south to north remained unchallenged until mid 1980s.

Rogers (1987) challenged this thesis and argued that 'advanced-backward axis' was from 'west to east'. His findings are based on a cluster study of 24 districts of Bihar plains for which he used six technical<sup>34</sup> indicators of development. Roger's study though technically closer to reality, treats development as a technical phenomenon. Therefore, it is reductionist in nature.

It is argued here that rural development is a social process rather than a technical one. Its contents and forms are the outcome of the relation between groups and classes of a rural society integrated into the local, national, and international political economy. Agrarian structure is not an external framework within which various classes function, rather it is the sum total of the processes in which each group operates in relation to the other groups (Thorne, 1976). Some of these relations are defined and enforced by law; others are customary; still others are of a flexible or fluctuating nature. Therefore, without ignoring significant role of technology in accelerating the processes of development, I attempt here to look into the structural changes in a broader context.

#### **4.1 The Technological Pointers**

The technological pointers to development suggest a radical shift in composition of irrigation devices over the stipulated period, while the pace of mechanisation has been slow in Bihar. The rising cost of technology is severely affecting those less in resources. Cattle still constitute dominant productive asset.

##### **4.1.1 The Irrigation**

Irrigation planning, in Bihar, emphasised Large Surface Water Irrigation Projects (LSWIP) with flood control as their joint objective. Until mid-80s about 77 percent of the total plan outlay on irrigation was spent on LSWIP and medium schemes (Sharma, 1987). In 1950-51, it was a set of diversified traditional systems<sup>35</sup> that dominated the composition of various irrigation sources. More than 70 percent of Gross Irrigated Area (GIA) was fed by *ahar and pynes*, open wells, tanks and other locally devised irrigation techniques. Canal irrigation contributed only 29.26 percent to total GIA and ground water resource was grossly unexploited. The new technology required a shift towards exploiting ground water resource via tube wells and canals. The composition considerably changed by 1970-71 in favour of canal irrigation contributing to about 41 percent to GIA and of tube wells to

about 19 percent (both 60 percent) with a marked decline in traditional systems now sharing only 40 percent.

This composition further changed in favour of tube well by 1983-84 sharing 35 percent. The percentage of canal irrigation slightly declined. The traditional systems simultaneously recorded a steep decline contributing only 24 percent to total and share of canal and tube well irrigation combine went up to 76 percent by 1983-84.

It is evident that traditional and modern systems of irrigation got reversed between 1950s and 1980s. This reversal was pronounced in north Bihar, where high water table allowed shallow tube well technology to become dominant source of irrigation. In central Bihar, canal remained dominant and tube well became the additional source of irrigation.

#### **4.1.2 The Fertilizer Use**

Bihar stood 'critically poor' in terms of fertilizer-use<sup>36</sup>, in relation to other states until mid-80s (Chadha, 1987). The average fertilizer-use per hectare cropped area in Bihar was only 1.35 kg during 1959-62 that increased to 21 kg during 1977-80. The fertilizer use-pattern<sup>37</sup> in the state during mid-70s revealed that while marginal farmers with net operated area up to 1 hectare were the least users of fertilizer, the small farmers with 1-2 hectare net operated area were among its better users (Murlidhar, 1981). This use-pattern explains as why smaller units get highest output.

The average fertilizer consumption<sup>38</sup> during 1994-95 was 64.51 kg per hectare. This was much below the national average (75.7 kg) and about one third of Punjab's average (174.7 kg.). The growing realisation of devastating effects of high fertilizer consumption in 'advanced' Punjab and Haryana, where the soil is facing serious 'health crisis' indicates that much potential still lies in the soil of 'backward' Bihar.

#### **4.1.3 The Mechanisation**

The average number<sup>39</sup> of tractors per thousand hectares in 1974-75 was 141 in 24 Bihar districts. A micro survey (Amar, 1993) located 250 tractors in one block of west Champaran district in north Bihar. The total number of tractors in 1986-87 was 27,801, which rose to 64,802 in 1995-96, less than 4 percent of the national count of 1,713,395.

These figures are an indicative of the pace of mechanisation in agriculture. Though power-threshers, electric pump sets (267,000) and other machines have made their conspicuous presence felt, but failed to replace traditional methods and techniques of harvesting and processing. A combination of two is a common sight.

Bihar lags behind in pace of mechanisation by all India comparisons. The contrasting picture, however, is the highest<sup>40</sup> (in the country) strength of cattle - 43,449,000! The growing importance of cattle wealth is increasingly being recognised by the agricultural scientists in Bihar. The exorbitant cost of mechanisation, on the other hand, is now creating a reverse situation where machine may have to compete with the cattle!

#### **4.2 The Institutional Change**

The institutional changes are even more striking, if observed in terms of labour processes, tenurial conditions, credit systems and in all marketing or exchange networks, in general. Many complex changes are occurring in production and exchange processes as well as relations in the agrarian economy that render any 'simplistic' analysis of the market and its identification with the freedom of the individual extremely reprehensible and problematic (Bhardwaj, 1990). The New Technology has had a disruptive impact on traditional patterns and entitlements. The growing privatisation and mercerisation of the rural economy and stringent individualism in social behaviour have deprived many of their customary claims.

The nature of **rural inequality** has also changed. Traditionally, as Kurien (1992) argues, it was principally a social factor associated with the caste system. Economic inequality was deeply embedded in caste system leading to caste-class congruence. Now, the old correspondence between social and economic inequality is less visible. Economic disparities are more conspicuous as a result of exclusive ownership of land, the rapid accumulation of resources in the hands of a small group of rural society and differing consumption patterns. What was once 'static inequality' has now become 'dynamic' (Kurien, 1992:89), given the ability of those with command over resources to accumulate more rapidly and thus accentuate disparities.

Caste has re-emerged as the crucial principle of alliances and, as a corollary, the principal idiom of competition and conflict. Why caste appears to be more significant in

the social and political structure of Bihar (than elsewhere in India) and more significant now than three decades ago? Wood (1999, 1992) argues that one reason lies in the historical poverty for the large population of this state, which necessitates private provisions of service and security in the context of public neglect and incompetence, with caste as a culturally available medium through which alliances can be established and loyalty and trust maintained.

The rural economy has become pronouncedly differentiated. At the bottom are those with no resource other than their labour power; above them are those with few resource beyond their own labour power dependent on the market for goods (both input and output) and credit (in a precarious position). This middle group is itself differentiated in terms of earnings, ranging from vulnerable small peasant, at the one end, to relatively prosperous medium farmer, on the other. And, at the top, are those who rely primarily on the ownership of non-labour resources. Their operations are governed by their sole objective of augmenting their non-labour resources over time. The labour market links them to the first groups and the product and credit markets link them to the second.

Wood (1992) observes a chain of causation with a population increase among farming households contributing to an intensified **structural fragmentation** process of family division, leading to smaller holdings per household and greater pressure to intensify land use. Alongside this process, there has been a loss of traditional farmer authority over labour and deteriorating access to officially provided agricultural inputs. In order to respond to the imperative to increase production, farmer households therefore have to rely more upon successful networking within and beyond the village. Far from a conventional model of new technology, commercialisation of production and open market economic transactions, farmers have to operate in a complex structure of markets interlocked against the poor and less well connected. These processes, Wood (ibid) observes, set up a **duality** in culture for which Bihar is famous: 'hospitality' and 'competition'. Private networks have to be continually serviced and maintained through hospitality and other exchanges as a precondition for successful competition. Under these conditions, several outcomes with structural significance can be observed such as:

- An increase in land market activity, with small and marginal farmers mortgaging out, leasing out and finally selling out portions of land;



- An imperative to intensify land use on the part of small farmers, which has a whole range of consequences, for instance, the severest access and capital constraint problems might hasten their need to dispose of remaining land and enter the labour market full-time;
- An increase in over all proportion of smaller farmers that depresses the labour market in two ways - low wages and growing female participation in labour market, thus reducing the overall labour demand within the village even under intensified conditions of land use.

Another implication of intensification of land use is increasing intensity of agricultural activity, which subsequently increases the demand for post-harvest services such as transportation and milling. This, finally, leads to increase in female labour involved in fieldwork as well as post-harvest work, in small farm households. For labouring families, women become certainly more engaged than before in fieldwork and post harvest operations for their employers. This prominence of women is reinforced not only by increased demand for labour through cropping intensity but also because of the competing demands for male labour from outside the region, which encouraged male out migration in a depressed labour market situation, at home.

The emergence of new markets and new patterns of transactions within village production systems and interlocking of these markets in Indian agriculture is regarded as evidence of incomplete capitalist relations in which actors are not free to pursue equilibrium prices. On the other hand, such markets do reveal some shift away from 'feudalistic monopolies', in that different actors can at least enter these markets for goods and services, albeit not on equal terms. With the various service markets having been developed in agriculture (e.g. for ploughing and irrigation), the monopoly significance of land as the sole determinant of rural wealth, security and power is diminished.

The declining importance of land as the variable and indicator of wealth and power has significant implications for agrarian systems and class structure. This has been observed during a field visit<sup>41</sup> to a north Bihar village in 1997. It was reported by the rich as well as poor that land (even 40-50 acres) was neither the sole or most important indicator of, nor the route to wealth, prosperity, and power. Though declining importance of land, as the route to wealth and power was associated with a tendency to earn easy money via other

means such as transport business, government contracts etc., accessed through political connection.

A marked shift from traditional form of sharecropping to **reverse tenancy** and **cost-share** leasing arrangements can be observed. A distinction between conventional tenancy arrangements with all their implications of social hierarchy and pre-capitalist forms of patron-client relations, on the one hand, and tenancy in a more modern, capitalist form, on the other is now evident.

The benefits from the new technology have been accrued mainly by rich peasants<sup>42</sup> and partly, by the middle, who bore the risk attached with the new opportunity. The new opportunity, on the other end, helped hastening the process of pauperisation of already deprived lower stratum that lost their meagre means of production in the modernisation process.

Bihar is a case for a defaulting state, unable to control markets and itself thereby marketised, argues Wood (1999). The state intends to redistribute resources, assets and opportunities yet, in practice, produces the distributive outcomes which might have occurred in the market place but with officials joining in the profit taking as a privileged class of commercial enterprising monopoly positions to receive rents and avoid risks. Official corruption is the norm not the exception. It is endemic and structural. It stimulates the networks, and in turn is sustained by them (Wood, *ibid*). Who loses? The overall scenario could be explained in terms of weak state, strong markets and poor losers!

The poor, the losers, are left with no option but to 'escape' in this overall complex and constraining survival conditions at home. The conflict between the 'forces of production' and the 'relations of production' aggravated by the defaulting state unable to control markets, heavily tilted against the poor is certainly not resolved by 'hospitality' and 'competition'. This is evident from large-scale out migration from north Bihar.

## **5. THE CENTRAL BIHAR: RESOLVING THE CONFLICTS VIA MOBILISATION**

The preceding section informs about how some parts of central Bihar emerged as 'pioneer' green revolutionised pockets through technical changes. This, however, could

not be supplemented by the institutional changes, as the land-reform laws remained grossly unimplemented until early seventies. The heightened expectations of the rural poor had to suffer serious setback. This culminated into militant mass mobilisation against huge land concentration in north Bihar under the Naxalite ideology in 1967. The 'land grab movement' launched by the Communist Party of India in 1970 across the state followed this. Since then, from liberal to radical and from reformist to revolutionary - all political forms and shades of struggle<sup>43</sup> for 'land to the tiller' found expression in Bihar.

This massive pressure from below forced the state to put into practice the Ceiling Act (Bharti, 1990b, 91a, 91b). The pressure from below was later recommended by the Planning Commission of India as well, which in its report (Prasad, 1993) recorded the 'lack of pressure from below' as one of the major causes of the failure of land reforms. A brief sketch of central Bihar is required here to explain the material conditions, which allowed mobilisation to become a preferred option to resolve the conflicts.

### 5.1 The Emerging Rich Peasantry and Class Polarisation

The agrarian structure in most parts of the central Bihar, just before the *zamindari* abolition, was characterised by the landlords mainly from two militant upper castes<sup>44</sup> occupying the summit, followed by occupancy *raiyats* and tenure-holders mainly from same castes and non-occupancy and under-*raiyats* from backward castes<sup>45</sup>. The agricultural labourer class that occupied the base was composed of *Harijan* and other backward castes poor. The layers of sub-infeudation were fewer (than north Bihar), therefore, after the *zamindari* was abolished, most of the cultivating peasantry got title to land in this region.

With this, the rigid caste stratification, hitherto identical to the stratification based on interests in land underwent drastic change. This led to the emergence of middle and rich peasantry from among the backward castes, as they were the numerous cultivating peasantries.

The Gaya<sup>46</sup> and Patna districts, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century remained the a of intense conflicts between upper castes landlords and the rising tenantry from upper and backward caste groups. The increasing assertion by backward castes tenants, which continued apace after *zamindari* abolition led to considerable decline in *begar* (a kind of

unpaid labour) and increase in wage-rates in this region. One of the implications of this situation was that the big landholders began adopting modern techniques for cultivation. It is interesting to note that the technological level of upper caste landholders has usually remained lower than backward caste peasants, especially from *Kurmi* caste. The upper caste landholders also continued with traditional practice of working a part of their land via *banihars* (farm servants) and renting out other parts for sharecropping.

The emergence of backward caste peasantry as dominant as well as fear and pressure generated by militant mass mobilisation of the poor since late sixties, led many upper caste landholders quit their rural bases and escape to the urban settings. One of the consequences of this 'escape' was 'distress' sale of their holdings, which were usually bought by backward castes peasants. The other consequence was increasing incidence of sharecropping, on often-unfavourable terms and conditions. Now, it were tenants who exercised bargaining power over the owners, who due to their 'absentee' status were pushed to weaker bargaining position.

If the upper caste landholders were on the defensive, who were at the loggerheads? They were powerful rich peasantry from backward castes, mainly *Kurmi* and *Yadav* – who had almost replaced the upper caste *Bhumihar* and *Rajput* zamindars of *zamindari* days. This new domineering agrarian class was more extracting and reactionary, in character, in relation to not only poor, but to their own poor caste fellows as well. Central Bihar emerged as the site of sharp conflict, predominantly, between the classes. Caste was pushed back and class alliances came at the fore. The radical mass mobilisation, therefore, had a sharp class edge characterised by rich peasantry – from upper and backward castes both (the later being prominent), at the one end; and poor peasants, share-croppers, farm-labourers (*Harijan* as well as backward caste poor) – all sharing a common front infused with the Naxalite ideology, on the other.

## 5.2 Structural Change: Some Features

The findings of a brief field visit conducted in four villages - Nonahi, Nagma, Damuha, and Khagari - in Jahanabad suggest that while some of the features of structural transformation were similar to those found in Tikapatti village, some other were dissimilar. The similar features were: modified forms of tenancy, i.e. non-traditional cash tenancy, and at some places, contractual tenancies; faster (than Tikapatti) pace of land-

fragmentation; opting out for private provision in irrigation and other inputs; market in inputs and factors of production via social networking. The social networking, however, is more determined by the class division, and less by the caste. The pace of mechanisation is slow; the factor's market depressed; labour market often negotiated by local mobilisers.

The dissimilar features are: very low incidence of out migration; higher wage rates in intense as well as peripheral struggle zones; stronger bond between the employer and the labour - mainly expressed in terms of 'attached' labour system – which is now negotiated and therefore, can not be said to be a 'half-bondage' labour system. This system, in fact, provides 'security' to both parties and bases on mutual negotiation on issues like, capacity to pay including other local factors that influence production conditions. Another dissimilar features are higher (than Tikapatti) level of consciousness among poor on social, political, economic and gender issues.

Mobilisation has given severe blow to doubly oppressive systems of class and gender in central Bihar. The persistent struggle has generated high level of consciousness, especially among lower caste poor people, men and women both. The poor have gained substantially and not in economic terms alone. Poor women, in particular, have gained as unprivileged class, caste and gender. They are liberated from the exploitative character of the 'social patriarchy' the most blatant expression of which is their sexploitation by men from privileged classes and castes. Why mobilisation remained the 'preffered' option to resolve the conflicts – answer lies in these 'gains' as well. However, before arriving at a conclusion, I need to delve into the processes of radical mobilisation (below).

### **5.3 The Naxalite Route To Liberation**

The Naxalite movement sparked off in Musahari block of Muzaffarpur district in Bihar<sup>47</sup>. This spread to whole of the north, i.e. from Champaran in west to Purnea and Saharasa in east, in 1967. This later spread to central Bihar. The aim was **agrarian revolution**<sup>48</sup>, which would culminate into transformation of the society as a whole. The society was believed to be based on exploitation and inequality of all forms and gender inequality was seen as an integral part of the social inequality. The party, which led the movement, was the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), i.e. the CPI (ML).

Liberation of all natural resources - land, in particular, from the private hands and its redistribution among actual tillers (of land) topped the Naxalite agenda. The landlords, were the first target. The programme adopted by the party for liberating land from their clutches included:

- Allow the landlords retain a part of land for their sustenance, if they voluntarily surrender all surpluses;
- Confiscate all land, if they do not surrender voluntarily as instructed by the party;
- Annihilate those, who do not respond accordingly and resort to violent and repressive measures to resist the mobilisers.

From June 1967 onwards, roving bands of peasants began forceful capturing of standing crops. Huge demonstrations were taken out by the landless demanding implementation of land reform schemes from the backward caste dominated government. By August 1969 altogether 346 incidents of confiscating of land took place across the state. In central Bihar such incidents took place mostly in Gaya district (Jannuzi, 1974). This first stormy phase of mobilisation was brutally suppressed by the state during 1973-74. The mobilisers went underground. This militant phase of Naxalite route to land reforms evoked three kinds of responses.

- The Gandhian route to land reform through Sarvodaya and Bhoodan movements was immediately followed to reconcile<sup>49</sup> the agitated peasantry.
- The CPI launched land grab movement in 1970 across the state. The party also acted as a 'pressure group' over the state. And, through these endeavours successfully retained its 'prestige' as a pro-poor<sup>50</sup> political force.
- The state government got 'alert' and began acting<sup>51</sup> towards implementing of the ceiling laws as well as revealing its concern for poverty eradication.

The 1977 parliamentary elections significantly influenced the Naxalite strategies. It was strongly felt that parliamentary democracy contains democratic reform potentials. Therefore, the 'tactical' use of elections<sup>52</sup> was incorporated into the agenda during **second phase** of the movement. This phase began since 1977 with its epicentre in Bhojpur and Patna districts; developed and extended to Gaya, Aurangabad by late 70s; and spread to Palamu in the south by early 80s. In Palamu, main contradictions were

identified between poor tribal peasants and the nexus of *diku* (outsider) landlords<sup>53</sup> and local *Banias* (money-lenders).

The movement, conceptually evolved by early 1980s with an understanding that the agrarian revolution must embrace the industrial areas as well, which hitherto had remained in the fold of trade union politics that was reduced to 'economism'. With a view to liberate the working class movement from 'economism' and to make it a part of agrarian revolution the Naxalite movement extended to industrial regions such as, Tata mining areas, copper mines, Sindri fertilizers, and in vast coalmines of Dhanbad. This conceptual evolution transformed the agenda for agrarian revolution into the total revolution - the vanguard of which remained the agrarian revolution.

Another significant development occurred during late 1980s with the formation of separate women's organisations to address gender issues (Chapter-11). Patriarchy was recognised as the main 'gender' contradiction and therefore, detrimental to women liberation and 'class' as the overarching prime contradiction.

The nature and status of Naxalite leadership also evolved over last decades. Unlike in west Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, the Naxalite leadership<sup>54</sup> in Bihar grew afresh throughout seventies and eighties. The initial leadership came from a tiny section of middle rank and local leadership of the CPI (M). This was aided, expanded and enriched by fresh leadership from rural as well as urban<sup>55</sup> settings. In fact, the spontaneous growth of leadership is also one of the reasons behind split after split in the ML movement - now broadly representing three streams: leftist, rightist and centrist within radical left spectrum. The basis of this division is the positions taken by different organisations<sup>56</sup> on three key issues: key strategic position, participation in elections, and forms (open or secret) of organisational structure. For an analytical convenience and also to avoid confusions over 'left' and 'right', I term the leftist as the 'hard liners', the rightist, as the 'soft liners', and the centrist, as the 'synthesisers'.

#### **5.4 The Present Phase: Mobilisation against Non-development**

It is strongly felt now that 'development' is essentially needed because, the change in power relations in favour of unprivileged (brought about through struggle) cannot sustain without 'favourable' material conditions to complement the process of overall change. It is

also felt that the struggle for change had reached to a plateau and for taking the consciousness at a higher plane, the movement needs a fresh agenda. And, it is well recognised that the state itself has emerged as the biggest appropriator of the resources meant for the poor. With such recognition, mobilisation against development bureaucracy is incorporated into the radical agenda during 1990s.

The synthesiser section of the movement offers a theoretical base for this. The soft liners and the hard liners though take different positions on 'development' itself converge on one point that struggle against corrupt bureaucracy is the felt need of the time. The 'soft liners' stand for mobilisation against 'non-development'. The synthesisers advocate mobilisation against 'detrimental' of development, which they have identified as 'Bureaucratic feudalism' (Sinha, 1996) in its institutional form. The 'hardliners' agree to take up the issue of development 'notionally'. This is evident from the statement below:

We should notionally take up the issue of agricultural development but also do our best to implement some development work on our own initiative defying intervention of government and landlords.....should determine minimum wage-rate, ensure better condition of work, and oppose and eradicate various forms of extra-market coercion of agricultural labourers and rural poor. (The Agrarian Programme of the CPI (ML) Party Unity, 1995: 23-5).

Even the stringent most of the hardliners<sup>57</sup> has throughout been concerned with mobilisation against corrupt forest contractors and development bureaucracy, while reiterating their persuasion for armed struggle against the state for breaking stagnation of the peasantry.

During my field visit (3.2) to Jahanabad the local activists of the biggest soft liner organisation<sup>58</sup> informed that wage struggles were now over and the problem was low productivity. The fact that low production could not ensure higher wage is well recognised. Therefore, the thrust has been on ensuring honest implementation of state sponsored welfare and development schemes as well as on exposing before the people false promises and claims made by the government.

Mobilisation now aims at ensuring a corruption-free development bureaucracy and implementation of development programmes. Bureaucratic feudalism is receiving wide acceptance within movement. The process of what may be termed as 'theorisation from



below' (6 below) in initiated in Bihar, though 'development' itself carries different meanings for the three streams.

## 5.5 The Achievements

The main issues around which rural poor were mobilised in central Bihar were: liberating of *Harijan* women from the clutches of the worst form of societal patriarchy, viz. sexploitation; wage enhancement, effective implementation of the minimum fixed daily wages (MFW) and gender-parity in wages; voting rights for poor and *Harijan* men and women; liberating of *gaimazarua* (owned by the government) and other ceiling surplus land for their actual redistribution among landless; liberating of common property resources from private hands. The community supervision and control of communal resources were other issues incorporated in radical agenda.

A huge number of plots liberated during first phase of mobilisation were later settled<sup>59</sup> with numerous poor peasants. Although some attempts for co-operative farming were taken initially, it could not succeed to a greater extent for many reasons. Many notorious landlords who sexually oppressed poor women were 'annihilated'. The social dignity of lower caste poor, in general and *Harijan* women, in particular was established.

The major economic gain during second phase was enhancement in wage rates. The sustained struggle succeeded in enforcing government fixed minimum wages (MFW) in intense struggle zones. In Jahanabad district MFW<sup>60</sup> was enforced in 138 out of 923 villages. In 628 villages wage was raised to a little below the MFW level and in 157, it remained much below the MFW. The reason for this was 'affordability' factor, which often necessitated locally negotiated wage rates (Bharti, 1990). This was accepted by both parties, viz. employers and labourers. This mode of wage fixation was encouraged in other regions as well. The farm labourers increasingly began negotiating wages with farmers by assessing their ability to pay on the basis of their land holding status, input costs, and other factors.

The percentage of the *gaimazarua* land encroached by landholders was highest (13.25) in Gaya district. The mobilisation succeeded in liberating substantial part of such land. Many plots of the poor peasants encroached by the landholders of domineering castes

on one pretext or another, who enforced them; to work their own plots as a sharecropper were liberated and restored by the original owners.

While no formal statistical account of land liberated via mass action do exist, majority of the allottees, which got title deeds for redistributed land have got actual possession. The cases of redistributed land having been fallen back into the hands of the same landowners due to weaker resource profile of poor farmers is a common feature in north Bihar. It is difficult to find in central Bihar. Credit goes to mobilisation, which poses threat to the land-grabbers, at the one end and manages collective farming, on the other. The dwarf size of such holdings, often below one acre, is managed this way.

Liberating of the *ahars* (reservoir) and *pokhars* (tanks) including other communal resources from illegal possession constituted next important agenda. Many fishing ponds, groves, grazing land, and other communal property and resources were liberated from private ownership (often grabbed by the domineering people) and put for community management and collective use. Poor were allowed fishing in the *ahars* and *pokhars* for consumption purposes. In the event of large-scale fishing, each family in the village gets a share irrespective of their participation in the fishing process. Other communal resources like grazing land, *Chatt* (fertile tracts along rivers / canals) land, plots possessed by *Maths* (religious seat), Mosques, Temples, *panchayat* and school compounds etc. are liberated from the illegal possession of domineering castes people.

Gender parity in wage, land rights, family ownership (in place of exclusive male ownership) of land constituted the gender component of the radical agenda. The family ownership and control over resources assigned importance to women's decision-making role within the family. While liberating of land and communal resources from the stronghold of the feudal order was the core of the economic programme of agrarian revolution, liberating of the dignity of *Harijan* women from the same order was the core of the social programme. It was the issue of *izzat* (dignity) of women, which initially sparked off local movements. At many occasions, such mobilisation got transformed into wage or land struggles after the gender issues were resolved (Devnathan, 1990). Mobilisation over political issues such as voting right included voting right for women as well (Bharti, 1988, 1990). Gender parity in wages, voting rights for women, joint titles to land for both the genders throughout remained an integral part of the radical agenda and poor women emerged as gainer in the process of mobilisation (Chapter - 11 below).

The answer to the question as why mobilisation has remained the preferred option to resolve the conflicts in central Bihar lies in the fact that poor of both the genders have substantially gained in economic, social, political and cultural terms. *Harijan* can no more be made 'bondage'; their women can no longer be subjected to sexploitation; petty *bataidar* could no more be given arbitrary (less) share of produce; violence from the rich is retaliated by counter-violence from the poor; old upper caste hegemony is completely on the defensive and neo-rich middle caste hegemony has to face retaliation. True, in this process, development has considerably suffered<sup>61</sup>, yet what the outcaste and lower caste poor men and women value most is not the material gains. The first and foremost gain they proclaim is their feeling that they are liberated from the centuries old unjust social order; that they have achieved social dignity.

## 6. THEORISATION FROM BELOW

It is the legacies of *zamindari* system rather than any ecological, environmental or cultural variables, which has been responsible for the backwardness of agriculture and consequent pervasive poverty in Bihar. In the 1960s and 70s, this condition prompted the thesis of **semi-feudalism** to explain the agrarian structure of Bihar. This was a thesis of leftist political economists, which has guided the political agendas of the radical movement.

The thesis argues that the agrarian structure remains dominated by large landlords controlling share cropping tenants and landless labourers, with surplus value appropriated through high rents, low wages, usurious interest rates (Prasad, 1973; Bhaduri, 1973) rather than through increases in productivity stimulated by recent development in the agricultural technology.

The findings of a joint study<sup>61</sup> carried out in 1981 (Prasad and Rogers, 1981) substantially corroborate to this thesis. The study discovered that about 59 percent of the cultivating households leased-in land of which only 1.07 percent on cash-rent terms, 0.16 percent on kind-rent, 11.76 percent on labour-service and the remaining 77 percent on crop sharing. As much as 59.29 percent of the households were found indebted to traditional sources. Attached labour system was found to be widely prevalent with 33 percent of the labour force attached to a single employer and 18 percent bonded on debt and share

cropping tenancy. The exorbitant interest-rate higher for the casual labourers than the attached one, sometimes as high as 120 percent per annum, was found. The feudal ethos discouraging family labour soiling-in hand in on-farm activities was significantly observed. This was explained in terms of prevalence of the leisure-preference<sup>62</sup> theory.

This thesis, however, does not mirror the real face of the present agrarian structure for more than one reasons. The analysis in preceding sections (2 and 3 above) suggest that tenancy, usury and attached labour system cannot be mechanically equated with 'feudalism' in present context. The monetisation of economy, wage labour system, fairly high rate of migration, capital-intensive farming etc. are now well pronounced. There exists sharecropping arrangements in which the interest in land improvement is, sometimes, shared between the owner and the actual tillers - a peculiar division - unsuitable to either classical or semi-feudalism or capitalist system.

The issue of whether Bihar can still be characterised as 'semi-feudal' cannot be ignored because social action depends upon analysis of the context. The semi-feudal characterisation now prompts an untenable view of class differentiation and conflict. This has led to unrealistic<sup>63</sup> radical mobilisation, at the one end and optimistic, over simple, populist policy measures by political parties eager to secure votes among these classes, on the other. The present spate of attacks and counter-attacks between the classes (Chapter - 11), often referred to as 'caste conflict', cannot be equated with the attacks by landlord-farmers and employer-money lenders on landless (mobilisers) during seventies. While the latter, may appear to be a logical redistributive response to landlessness under semi-feudalism (Wood, 1992) the former is explained in terms of a 'desperate attempt of last offensive' by the remnants of the old feudal order (Sinha and Sinha, 1996). If the analysis is more accurate and reflective of the subtlety of social relations, then the radical politics can assist the poor more effectively.

The movement reviewed its past experience in early 90s. It has been recognised that in central Bihar, the economic issues like wage and land etc. became strategically less relevant because, these conflicts were 'resolved' to a greater extent. The class and caste bases of gender exploitation were substantially eliminated. The strategic needs for mobilisation against non-development and forging unity with middle peasantry has been well recognised. This is reflected in a quote from a document of one section of the 'hard liners' below:

One phase of our struggles .....have come to an end.....to develop the struggles ....to the next phase..... we should organise movements on such issues as.....irrigation, regular supply of electricity and other inputs at reasonable prices, annulment of loans of poor and middle peasants as well as political issues concerning democratic rights.....should intervene in the reform programmes, launch movements against corruption in the process of implementation of these reform programmes through village committees. (Important lessons from the Summing up Process, CPI (ML) Party Unity, Vol-8, No.2, 1995: 11-2)

The process of review did not stop here. It is increasingly recognised that the 'semi-feudal' (Prasad, Rogers, Bhaduri and others) and the 'capitalist' (Thorner, Patnaik, Rudra and others) characterisations are prone to broad generalisations and ignore the regional variations - a unique feature of Indian agrarian structure, which applies to Bihar as well. The grassroots experience in different regions has led the local leadership explore and recognise that the 'local condition' variable plays the key determinant in explaining the nature of the whole set of contradictions ranging from feudal, semi-feudal, capitalist to tribal modes of production and exploitation. The quest for a 'realistic' characterisation of production modes emanating from the grassroots is now leading to a process of what may be termed as 'theorisation from below'.

The mode of production debate<sup>64</sup> initiated within movement in 1997. This brought to light a whole set of fresh arguments that offer an entirely different (from erstwhile semi-feudal and / or capitalist theses) thesis emerging from the grassroots. It is argued that the study of Indian society from the vantage point of European feudalism is a case of misguided application<sup>65</sup>. Therefore, a fresh look into the issue of 'production mode' is required to capture the local realities (Sinha, 1997). The main arguments are summed up below:

- The Indian model of feudalism has remained 'basically' different from that of the classical European model of feudalism. Sinha (ibid) highlights three basic differences. First, land in India 'naturally' belonged to its tillers, i.e. the peasantry, while in feudal England, it were the landed aristocracies which enjoyed direct right and control over land and continued to extract surplus. Second, while in England, the 'feudalism' was rooted in the rights (of the feudal forces) over land, in India; it was rooted in the administrative status and power. It was never a direct right in land that facilitated the feudal forces extracting 'surplus' during Mughal age. It was, instead, the status, power and position acquired through 'feudal bureaucratic

system' that provided material basis for 'surplus extraction' from the peasantry. The peculiar phenomenon of entitlement to surplus without much control over the means of production (Sharma, 1995:11, quoted in Gupta, 1995) could be observed in ancient India as well. Third, the caste system has historically remained an integral part of the production mode, i.e., the 'basics' in India, therefore, cannot be treated as 'superstructure'.

- Sinha (1996) strongly argues that the (semi) feudalism, which had to retreat from the land and caste (upper) hegemony in the course of radical mobilisation has reincarnated itself in the form of, what he terms as, **Bureaucratic feudalism**. Its mainstay is expropriation of public money, development fund in particular, from the state exchequer through a nexus of politician, bureaucrats, contractors, criminals and Mafiosi's. This new class of 'Bureaucratic feudal' expropriates public money earmarked for development and other purposes using their status and power via various dubious means. This appears to be a 'cultural revival' of the old surplus-extraction mode, the material basis for which was status and power attached to the positions of *jagirdars* and *mansabdars* (Habib, 1995:97, quoted in Sinha, 1997) within feudal bureaucratic system during Mughal age. That the class also emerges out of the culture<sup>66</sup> appears to be relevant in this context.
- The marked difference from the 'old system', however, is that the present system is functioning under a bourgeois constitution. Therefore, this expropriation is taking place in an 'illegal' way though in full knowledge and connivance of the ruling classes, which remain as the silent collaborator<sup>67</sup> until the system is threatened. Sinha (1996, 1997) argues that the growing number of big and small scams exposed during 1990s in India including in Bihar is the supportive evidence to 'Bureaucratic feudalism'.

Sinha (1997) further argues that India could be broadly divided into three regions from a mode of production characterisation viewpoint: the first category, covers those parts of the country, where capitalist penetration (not transformation) has fairly taken place leaving some semi-feudal remnants behind; the second, embraces those regions where semi-feudal production relations predominate with partial capitalist penetration; and the third, envelopes the vast tribal areas<sup>68</sup>, where only a fraction of the production system has experienced modernisation leaving the substantial part still virgin experiencing a

'primitive' type of production mode. The issue of dominant mode of production, therefore, is difficult to resolve because, going by average plot-size, nature of production - which is predominantly subsistence, inter-connected local markets etc., Sinha (ibid) argues that it is the petty mode of production<sup>69</sup>, which still appears to be widespread in India comprising nearly 91 percent<sup>70</sup> of the farming households.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The 'petty production mode' thesis allows more scope for study women's involvement in farming. The fact that it is the small and middle peasant households that still grow the substantial food involving hard family labour in Bihar, can neither be denied nor be ignored. The latest agenda of mobilisation for development' and against 'bureaucratic feudalism' does not exclude women anyway. An empirical enquiry into these themes would necessitate incorporating of women en mass from poor, small and middle peasant households. The potential of social action could also be enormous against this backdrop, which usually gets severely restricted with a conventional approach to address women, as a 'category'. The 'petty production mode' thesis contains strong potential to argue in favour of a farming system, of which women are the backbone (Chapter - 8).

In north Bihar, migration has allowed women act more assertive and decisive in absence of men. Though left alone and often vulnerable, this opportunity allows them discover their own 'self' in the process of coping with the situation. The process, though painful is liberating. Migration helps 'elevate' the social status of a migrant labour, which has positive impact on position of their women as well. An exploration and diverse analysis of the 'escape' route to women liberation is offered (in Part – 3) below.

In central Bihar women are struggling with men. Despite hardships, the sense of togetherness in struggle against class and gender exploitation is strengthening. The other aspect of struggle is increased involvement of women in production and sustenance work because men if become 'full timer' activists can hardly afford to take up full-fledged cultivation. The household then becomes female managed even if a man is present. The 'struggle' route to women liberation is explored (in Part-IV) below.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This thesis is an exploratory account of the processes of social change. Social change is a multi-dimensional process, in which all dimensions interact with one another and in many ways. This makes social change inherently an interactive process. One of the objectives of this thesis is to capture the specific 'realities' emerging from the interaction between the external and internal forces of change. This reality is 'women liberation', the external forces of change are market opportunities and mobilisation endeavours, and internal forces are women and men themselves located in their social, cultural, psychological, political environment, and agrarian settings.

Study of human behaviour that a social science research endeavour does cannot be a simple and linear process either. This becomes even more complex when involves a non-material issue like 'liberation', which may be explored, assessed, and evaluated through material and non-material 'reflections'. Real lives are qualitative; therefore, a social science research endeavour needs to be sensitive to this aspect. My emphasis has been on what emerges from the 'ground' of my research universe and its actors rather than any 'pre-constructs' in my mind. I have pursued just such a research effort with this study.

#### **2. ENTERING THE VACUUM AND MEETING THE OLD AFFINITY**

Entering Tikapatti village, the site of the Main Fieldwork, was like entering the vacuum. This was a new region for me to research. The arena of the proposed research, though not entirely new, had newness in its content. To make it clear, while the context, i.e. agrarian change was not new, the content, i.e. gender was entirely new. It helped me tempering the solitude of vacuum, then entering Purnea, for the first time, with a tiny research group led by Dr Geoff Wood, the Supervisor of this thesis, for Orientation and On-the-Job Training. This was the first phase (February 12-22, 1991) of fieldwork, a 10-day trip including a week long stay in a village<sup>1</sup> located in the neighbour district of Araria (see Table 6.1 Chronology of Trips below). Visiting Jahanabad, the Supplementary site of fieldwork, by contrast, was revisiting (Chapter -1:1.2) a region with a new orientation and



a fresh agenda. While the experience in Tikapatti was like establishing affinity with the whole social environment and populace of the region step-wise with each successive trip to the field, in Jahanabad, it was like meeting an affinity after a few years gap.

People in north and central Bihar cannot be understood without a cultural grasp to look beyond and beneath the surface. The need to comprehend the 'tone behind the speech' - one of the tenets of the postmodernist approach to look at the things is relevant here. The normally 'diplomatic' cultural context of Tikapatti (north Bihar) is just reverse to normally 'outspoken' cultural context of Jahanabad (central Bihar). The 'visibility' of women has to be seen in this cultural context as well. Along with this overarching historically ingrained (Chapter-5) regional basis of cultural differences, caste and class issues cannot be overlooked. For instance, the poor speak more than middle class people; lower caste people are now more outspoken, especially in central Bihar, where political mobilisation has strengthened their voices. For authentic data collection these local factors become decisive.

My previous research experience as well as this study has led me to realise that establishing affinity with the research 'subject' is a prerequisite for intensive fieldwork. Though, a simultaneous sense of 'detachment' from the subject has to be developed to avoid undesirable 'subjectivity'.

Doing fieldwork for a woman on her own in any part of Bihar may not be an easy exercise from a gender viewpoint. I had to face no problem in Purnea town as my journalistic and political resource-profile (Chapter -1:1.2) facilitated me every step. The problem appeared during second phase (March 9–23) of the fieldwork in Rupauli Block where I was left with no option but to stay for a week in the government guesthouse. Inhibitions regarding staying alone in a government guesthouse, that may sometimes even pose 'danger' to life and dignity given the criminal elements inflict the locality - persist. I had to take my brother, Chaitanya, to accompany me at Rupauli to avoid any susceptible situation. This difficult social environment was further aggravated by the lack of electric power facility badly interrupting the work - a normal feature in Bihar.

Here, the unusual cooperation extended by the Circle Officer (K K Jha) not only in data-collection from Rupauli and from revenue office Dhamdaha, but in arranging a 'safe' and 'secure' place of accommodation under his personal care and supervision was of great

help. Obtaining government records from a block office in Bihar (then the locality was deprived of a Xerox machine; and especially land records, often kept in a way that leaves you with no choice but to resort to a manual exercise of copying it) makes you realise how difficult this exercise is. This was situation in presence of a 'supporting' bureaucracy - often use to be hostile<sup>2</sup> to investigations and data-collection.

Table 6.1: Chronology of Trips  
(Main fieldwork in north Bihar: Village Tikapatti)

Sequence of Trips	Frequency	Continuation	Year	Destination
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1 <sup>st</sup> Phase	10 days	Feb. 12 - 22	1991	Patna - Purnea - Raniganj - Pachira and Return
2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase	14 days	March 9 - 23	1991	Patna - Purnea -Dhamdaha-Rupauli and Return
3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase	12 days	April 7 - 19	1991	Patna - Purnea - Rupauli - Tikapatti and Return
4 <sup>th</sup> Phase	19 days	May 2 - 21	1991	Patna - Purnea - Rupauli - Tikapatti And Return
5 <sup>th</sup> Phase	19 days	May 28 - June16	1991	Patna - Purnea - Tikapatti And Return
6 <sup>th</sup> Phase	17 days	June 21 - July 8	1991	Patna - Katihar - Tikapatti And Return

During third phase (April 7 –19) of fieldwork, I felt confident to stay all-alone in the same guesthouse in Rupauli, under the personal hospitality of K K Jha's family. His wife, often curious about what I was 'doing' for women was taking me to her neighbour families - mainly block level officials- one of them a doctor, another an engineer, yet another a teacher. Informal talks with these families (women and men both) enhanced my understanding and knowledge about the area and the village Tikapatti, the final site of my work. During this trip, I made a random field visit to some villages located nearby Rupauli. Besides, qualitative data from radical political organisations e.g. the CPI (M) and the CPI (ML) Liberation, were also obtained over this weeklong stay. On the last day of my stay in Rupauli, I was supported by the local MLA - then a CPI deserter who won as Independent candidate - who for the first time, took me to Tikapatti in his official Jeep and after introducing me to Kulanand Mandal, the *Mukhiya* (the *panchayat* headman) at his residence, vanished. My maiden visit to Tikapatti was oriented to create some good connections inside the village for stepping in for next phase of fieldwork with longer phases of stay in Tikapatti. This purpose was served.

The next direct step was in Tikapatti during fourth phase (May 2 - 21), where initially developed key contacts were utilized for pursuing intensive fieldwork, staying in village. A cautious approach to choose a place for stay has to be taken in the countryside as one has to become an 'insider' simultaneously retaining oneself as an 'outsider' to become an 'objective' and 'scientific' observer of the facts, feelings, situations, and overall environment in which one has to work. Internal pressures, favours, partisans, and emotionality have to be combated in order to remain 'unfettered'. For instance, while investigating 'classes', staying with an affluent family may create inhibitions in asking certain troubling questions. Or, while penetrating 'gender' veils, treatment with the genders separately may not be an easy exercise, in the same family, where one is staying. Here, a cautious approach is needed in a culturally binding society, where western mode of democratic values may not serve the purpose. Yet, what I tried to create was an atmosphere of trust and confidence for me among my respondents.

I opted to stay - during fourth phase with the *Mukhiya's* family, of course, explaining to them my need for a relatively uninterrupted corner of the house. During fifth phase (May 28 – June 13), I stayed with a middle peasant family, in which men has been engaged in a non-farming occupation, women being engaged in farming, i.e. in the house of Krityanand Mandal. During sixth phase (June 21- July 8), I got a separate small house of a person staying away from the village. His relatives staying in village managed this.

I recruited Chandrakishore Mandal, an undergraduate pursuing Geography and Sociology, as an assistant. This youth worked throughout with me as an informal associate fieldworker, and revealed keen interest in informal training obtained during work. Bhawana Devi has been another key source in Tikapatti. Yet another set of key actors (in research) consisted of Shivarani Devi, Dr. Rajendra Venu, Dr. Bhola Prashant, historian Tarini Pd Nirjhar, Meena Das, and Lakho Devi.

A fair degree of hospitality, and warmth for a 'guest' is a normal cultural affair in Bihar. To this was added a sense of 'care', especially, for a woman doing such 'extraordinary' work. Despite overall degenerating educational atmosphere, drive for learning and deep sense of appreciation for intellectual pursuits is culturally ingrained in Bihar. For instance, Patna, still occupies top rank followed by Trivendrum (the capital city of Kerala) in India where the highest number of journals are bought and sold. Leading publications in both Hindi and English have widest circulation in Bihar. And, about a decade ago, while in

'poor and backward' Bihar 54-55 copies of the Encyclopaedia of Britannica were bought, in 'rich and developed' Punjab this number was only 4! These facts present a distinct Bihar-Punjab and Bihar-Kerala contrast.

### 3. TIKAPATTI VILLAGE: INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN FIELDWORK LOCATION

Tikapatti is a big village from a north Bihar standard big village criterion<sup>3</sup> - both in terms of area and population. Located at Rupauli-Kursela road at about 12 Kilometre distance (in south-east direction) from Rupauli block headquarters, Tikapatti is the convergence point of Purnea and Katihar districts. What forms the boundary of the two districts within the village is Kadwan river, a small stream diverged from the Kosi river, which unequally bisects Tikapatti. The major part of the village forms the extreme south-eastern region of Purnea and the minor part that lies on eastern bank of the river falls in the south-western end of Katihar (MAP 3). The minor part, Chandpur Tola, falls in Falka block of Katihar. This part is beyond the purview of this study.

Tikapatti is, therefore, closer to Katihar district HQ than Purnea district HQ. This close proximity with more urbanized Katihar has influence over social, political, cultural, and economic environment of the village. A relatively developed environment had a significant role to play in designing the fieldwork methodology.

The official name of the village is '*Dhusar Tikapatti*'. The meaning of *Dhusar* is 'dust' and of *Patti* is 'tract', therefore, *Dhusar Tikapatti* may be literally translated as 'tract or land of dust', which symbolises a less fertile quality of land as well. Going by the tradition<sup>4</sup> of acquiring name by villages on the basis of kind of tenurial system historically prevalent in this area, it appears that Tikapatti has taken its name from *Thikadari* (contractual agreement) form of tenurial system. From this view point *Tika* appears to be a distorted form of the term '*Thika*' that means contract. *Thikadari* was one form of prevalent tenurial system in Kosi diara, of which this village was a part. Therefore, *Dhusar Tikapatti* may be explained as 'contracted tract of dusty soil'. One more tenurial system based explanation could be traced in Chakraborty's study (1986), which informs about '*Pattidan*' as another prevalent form of tenancy. It appears that Tikapatti may have taken its name either from '*Thika*' or from '*Patti*' or from both. In whatever way it is traced, the name 'Tikapatti' appears to have its origin in ecology-induced tenancy system.

Tikapatti, together with Teldiha village constitute Tikapatti *Panchayat*<sup>6</sup>. The local development administration is run from block development office, Rupauli and revenue administration from the sub-divisional headquarter, located at Dhamdaha. While locational proximity with Katihar facilitates one to approach village conveniently from Katihar (12 Km east) for primary fieldwork, Rupauli (12-13 Km), Dhamdaha (25) and Purnea (50-52km) in the north have to be approached for secondary data collection.

### 3.1 Demography and Social Conglomeration

The substantial part of Tikapatti village falling under the purview of this study had in 1991 a total populace of 8486 accommodated in 1555 households. The total geographical area stood at 1362 hectares, out of which 962 hectares were put under cultivable land category. These figures are computed after excluding certain percentage (5 % from the figures obtained from the Census 1991 below) attributed to Chandpur *tola*. This is done on the basis of total percentage of tribal populace inhabiting Chandpur *tola*, which is below 5 as per 1991 census.

The Census 1991 figures (Appendix - 6) relating to the village as a whole (including Chandpur Tola) puts total geographical area at 1434.19 hectares; population including institutional and houseless at 8,933; number of occupied residential houses at 1577; and total households at 1637 suggesting less than 6 people constituting a household. This was about a thirty percent increase over the population figures recorded in 1971, which the material resources and social institutions had to cope with during 1990s. Caste division and unity both is reflected into local conglomeration of people living in more than a dozen *tolas* (hamlets); some of these organised along a particular caste lines, such as *Kesari tola*, *Yadav tola*. Some of these organised along a group of three-four castes, such as *Baidira tola*, *Gandhi tola*; and some others accommodating all caste people, such as *Shivalaya tola*, *Chandpur tola*, and *Lanka tola*.

### 3.2 Methodological Significance of Tikapatti

Tikapatti village represents a particular case for field study. One can find a traditional set of values guiding people's lives, in some spheres and a progressive set of values replacing traditional ones, in some other. It is a village retaining all characteristics of a

village society, culture, and economy, with fairly good urbanization transforming the rural values into an urban culture simultaneously. The agrarian relations are heterogeneous: though modern capitalist relations dominate, especially in cash-crop sector, traditional agrarian relations prevail in food sector. Cash payment mode prevails in factor markets yet traditional networking based transactions persist. While a cash mode of wage payment is the norm in cash-crop sector, a kind and cash combined mode of payment prevails in food sector. Kind mode of payment still persists in tenancy sharing arrangement in food sector while formal legal contract arrangement is normal in cash sector. Traditional *Jajmani* has transformed into a modern marketable skills though a group of artisan families surviving through *jajmani* system can be seen. In every sphere of village life new sets of values, at some places, have replaced old values; at some other, are blended with old one; and still at some others, old values persist. There are many villages in this predominantly rural region that represent some of these characteristics but it is difficult to find a combination of all in one village. With all these general and special characteristics uniquely combined at one site, Tikapatti can be treated as a 'key hole' for the region as whole. This empirical site may also be treated as a 'key hole' for those regions in the north Bihar<sup>6</sup> where a partial urbanization consequent upon modernisation in farming is occurring.

The social, cultural, and political fabric of Tikapatti village is interwoven against the vivid backdrop of Gandhian ideology, which is still not much faded. The village has provided one of the various Chief Ministers<sup>7</sup> to the state between 1968-72, who came from one of the extremely backward castes in Bihar. Even now any important political dignitary visiting Purnea makes it a point to visit Tikapatti.

It is the legacy of the active role that this village played as one of the nerve centres of the nationalist movement, which could be attributed to a substantial number of socially and politically conscious and educated people (men and women both); complete elimination of untouchability and purdah from social life; a relatively cohesive society and a reformist accommodative culture.

The methodological significance of above description lies in the fact that Tikapatti represents a vivacious site for exploring as well as experimenting with the set of methodological tools having been adopted for obtaining various sets of quantitative and qualitative data suited to my research needs.

#### 4. EPISTEMOLOGY

Much of the conventional analysis of the rural political economic processes treats the rural community as a set of isolated social structures traditionally independent of other rural communities. Agrarian structure is not an external framework within which various classes function. It is, by contrast, the sum total of the processes in which each group operates in relation to the other groups; some of these relations are defined and enforced by law, others are customary, and yet some others are of flexible and fluctuating characters (Thorner, 1976:8). While writing about different social groups I have tried to pursue the above analytical vision about the agrarian structure.

The villages in Bihar (or elsewhere) cannot be understood without reference to the wider processes of change and beyond. But more importantly, the converse applies. By studying village Tikapatti, the grander themes of structural change, the changing dynamics of agrarian relations, and the scope for spontaneous changes in gender-relations intrinsic in these changes, all is illustrated with some detail. If such detail consisted only of quantitative information, then farmers and labourers across the region could have been surveyed to offer more representative illustration. However even if done well, not much unambiguous knowledge could have been captured in this way especially if presumption would have been the main ingredient in survey design. Real lives are qualitative and have to be understood through an appropriate qualitative methodology, which involves observation, informal talks, case studies and other tools of social anthropological methods. People's motivations, arrangements and compromises all produce the institutions through which opportunities are created and constraints imposed. Such detail is not acquired through large-scale survey approaches but through case studies, with a universe small enough to be adequately comprehended. It is a route to the analysis of wider process, not as a microcosm but as an element of the whole (Wood, 1984, 1992). This is the main justification for a village level study, which should neither make any claims to typicality, nor feel the need for such a claim. Of course, if several communities in the same region can be studied in a similar way then our understanding of wider process is thereby enhanced. I have pursued just such a research effort with this study.

Srinivas has placed squarely the question of subjective analysis in the realm of social science research. More recently scholars have looked specifically at the position of

women in the field (di Leonardo, 1991; Hondagneu Sotelo, 1988, quoted in Rege, 1994 and Panini, 1991; Strathern, 1987a, quoted in Karlekar, 1995). Srinivas observes that to be a successful fieldworker meant not only collecting "a vast amount of minutia of ethnography" but also exercising "powers of empathy" (Srinivas, 1998). In this respect, the sociologist is like a novelist who must of necessity get under the skin of the different characters s/he is writing about.

I find Edward Bruner's idea of a 'basic story' extremely useful here. Bruner (1983:5) points out that each time a story is read, referred, or studied, 'it is placed in a particular context and given meaning by a reader'. However, this does not get away from the fact that there is a 'basic story', which has to be understood. For if interpretation is of the essence, it is dependent on the existence of a story. No anthropologist can quibble over the fact that certain kinds of data such as factual information on respondents such as age, household size, number of children etc. will appear the same to all investigators: they are the backbone of the 'basic story'.

Over the last couple of decade's innovations in data-collection techniques have responded to the need to develop the 'basic story' from more authentic and varied sources. For instance, the technique of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) developed in the 1980's was oriented mainly to obtain 'quick field-oriented results' (Mukherji, 1993, quoted in Karlekar, 1995). Soon it became evident that with the paradigm shifts in development strategies, it was important to involve the people concerned in an analysis of their situation. Thus Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) built on RRA has been developed as a methodology aiming at interacting with the villagers, understanding them as well as learning from them (Mukherji, *ibid*). The emphasis is on hearing the people's voices in terms of not only felt needs but also perceptions of the context of their lives. I have kept reminding myself of the basic tenets underlying these methodologies. The emphasis has been on what emerges from the ground of my research universe rather than any 'pre-construct' in my mind. I have tried to maintain this principle all through this study.

#### **4.1 Methodological Debate: Evolving of A Feminist Research Method**

My study is a pioneer in the area of Women's studies in Bihar<sup>8</sup>. With a background in economics and in quantitative methods in survey design, switching over to qualitative methods alone would have proved to be an exercise of opting out for one significant thing



while ignoring the other. Reductionist tendencies in quantitative research have produced 'data-enslaved' empirical studies. Economics is most prone to this tendency. The situation in sociology too is not much different, as Das (1993) identifies in her discussion-evoking article about the critical state of sociological research in India.

Karlekar (1995) points to the fact that the period between late 60s and early 70s was the high point of positivism and structural functionalism in Indian sociology, when it seemed enough to be aware of one's role as an outsider, an interpreter, while doing an academically sound piece of research. The shift in emphasis to case studies and the micro-level became significant by early 80s in Women's studies, which initially began under the academic umbrella of sociology.

Krishnaraj (1988a) views Women's studies' as a distinct interdisciplinary enterprise because: (a) women's studies is yet to develop adequately its theoretical base; (b) gender dichotomy runs right through all levels of society; and (c) the discipline-structures have evolved without credence to women's lives, experiences, contributions. Going by this position Women's Studies in India is in its early stage of evolution.

Women's studies have much to share with the fieldwork-based traditions in sociology and social anthropology. Notions of objectivity versus subjectivity, of taking sides and yet trying to remain 'intact', and ultimately, questions on the space occupied by the fieldworker are those which have concerned sociologists and social anthropologists for some decades now (Beteille and Madan, 1975; Clifford and Marcuse 1986; Leach, 1961; Malinowski, 1961; Srinivas, 1966, 1983; Turner and Bruner, 1986, all quoted in Uberoi, 1993 and Bruner, 1983). The emphasis of women's studies on reflexivity, on knowledge as shared experience, finds an echo in contemporary theoretical traditions, particularly post-modernism and post-structuralism. The Critics of the reigning canons in western culture point to the dominance of enlightenment and universalising principles, objectivity and positivism, which according to Nicholson (1990: 4, in Rege, 1994) belongs to 'a specific historical time and geographical region associated with certain political baggage'.

The Post-modernism believes that legitimacy - and hence discourse - is plural and therefore local (Srikantha, 1996). At the same time, the inherent danger of shifting 'foci' and many legitimations implies that the truth lies in no fixed place - or rather it is in many places. Women studies scholars find attractive the belief that the observer and the

observed, the teacher and the taught, the reader and the text, collaborate in the act of interpretation and creation. A dialogue and mutuality characterises these relationships, yet these must be within the parameters of location and context - this point of caution is raised by anthropologists (Karlekar, 1995). A recognition of different locations and of different power matrices does not mean a denial of location altogether.

Women's studies initiate a critical dialogue arising out of the realisation that one is at once immersed in and alienated from one's discipline. As Marcia Westcott (1988) comments, 'the personal struggle of being both an insider and outsider is not only a source of knowledge and insight but also a sense of self-criticism.'

One instance of creation of knowledge through action is the emergence of a committed sensitive genre of research, which analyses social reality from the perspective of the oppressed and which involves the researchers participation in the lives and struggles of the researched. Women's studies have the potential to reflect this instance. This research from 'within' and 'below' breaks the methodological smoke-screen created by the positivists, separating the subject and object of research. This also challenges the ultra-positivist tenets of research, though not dispensing with the canons of objectivity which are meaningful only in relation to the desired end-states (Pandhe, 1988).

The 'feminist methodologies' (Bombyle, Reinhartz, and Wright, 1983) have addressed themselves to consciousness-raising through research, challenging the dichotomy of subject and object of research and the complex questions of power in writing and research. Indian feminists have been struggling against the parasitism of its academic agenda upon the first world (Uberoi, 1993). Rege (1994) argues that use of such methodologies in Indian context requires shifting from a 'woman's standpoint' to a standpoint that bears in mind the complex collusions and contestations between castes, class, gender and communities. Exactly! The heterogeneous and multidimensional social realities of the Indian context must not be missed out while designing methodology. Yet for viewing the universe from a woman's standpoint within these collusions and contestations one may not need to take a shift completely from the 'woman's standpoint' which itself is a basic shift from a gender-neutral approach to address the issues. Therefore, instead of a simple Euro-centric radical woman's standpoint, what we need to incorporate into the Indian context is a woman's standpoint sensitive to class-caste-community and other local identities and expressions. My experience suggests that the

inter-play of these contrary forces form one of the basic characteristics of this field of study.

My empirical sites present strong cases for gender-sensitive contributions of men to the feminist research. In Tikapatti as well as in the villages of Jahanabad, men sympathetic to feminism<sup>9</sup> and acting in favour of the same were not difficult to locate. I must remind here to Harding's (1987) unusual insistence over this aspect. She argues that men who are sympathetic to feminism and who recognise the exploitation of women in everyday life be included in the feminist community, especially since every issue is a feminist one. Harding extends her position to the arena of research as well:

[W]e can see many research projects, which are particularly suitable for men sympathetic to feminism to conduct..... These are a critical examination of the gendered dimensions of men's thoughts and behaviours historically and cross-culturally..... In addition to the scholarly or scientific benefits, which would accrue from such studies, this kind of self-critical research by men makes a kind of political contribution to the emancipation of women, which inquiries by women cannot achieve (Harding, 1987: 11-12, underscore original).

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

By 'methodology', here, I mean the whole set of working procedures devised and adopted for the study. The methodology devised initially for the north Bihar site of our main fieldwork evolved during each fieldwork trip. The methodology adopted for Central Bihar may be what Thorner (1976:8) terms as a series of hit-and-run raids into the countryside. I visited villages, asked questions directly of the villagers and was answered. If not satisfied with the answers, I asked time and again until convinced. Thus, the methodology devised for the main fieldwork, i.e. Tikapatti village is intensive in coverage while, for the Central Bihar, it is extensive. A combination of quantitative survey designs and qualitative social anthropological method has been created.

### **5.1 Primary Method: The Main Fieldwork (1991)**

The main fieldwork for this study was conducted in six phases in 1991 (Table 6.1 above).

**Phase 1 (February 12 - 22):** Orientation with the supervisor in his fieldwork village. Documentation at district level. Defining criteria for block and village selection. Interim Report on issues arising from this 'reconnaissance' phase.

**Phase 2 (March 9 - 23):** Documentation at district level resumed. Unstructured talks and interviews with informed people, such as journalists, lawyers, teachers and political persons as well as party (Communist Party of India, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Janta Dal, CPI (ML) Liberation) affiliates to gain overall understanding of the region. Moved to Rupauli for block and sub-division level documentation. Selection of village for case study confirmed.

**Phase 3 (April 7-19):** Documentation work at sub-division and block level resumed. Unstructured talks and interviews conducted with informed people such as doctor, engineer and teacher and their women in such families. All these respondents were 'outsider' as they were in government jobs, posted for a few years in Rupauli block and Damdaha sub-divisional administrative set up. Interviews with local activists of the CPI and the CPI (ML) Liberation. Random visit to surrounding villages to check the comparative 'competence' of the 'selected village'.

**Phase 4 (May 2 – 21):** Block level collection of records about village. Household listing and selection of sample households in the village. Unstructured interviews with the key sources. Maintenance of 'fieldwork diary'.

**Phase 5 (May 28 - June 16):** Sample Household Survey. This contained structured interviews with 155 households. Unstructured interviewing went on simultaneously. Group discussions on relevant issues and participatory observations in different parts of village carried on.

**Phase 6 (June 21 – July 8):** The process began during Phase 5 resumed. Structured interviews completed. Detailed interviews with the 'case households' and 'case' women actors conducted. The cases were selected out of 155 sample households.

## **5.2 Primary Method / Supplementary Fieldwork (1993)**

The supplementary phases of fieldwork (three) were conducted in north and central Bihar (see Table 6.2 below) in 1993. One additional phase of fieldwork in central Bihar was conducted in 1995 (Table 6.2 below). The preparation for the supplementary field trip to Bihar consisted of a short fieldwork strategies paper based on identifying gaps in present data at village, block, district and state levels. This visit was made to the fieldwork area to

supplement data gaps so far identified. Further work was done at the ANSISS and Patna University libraries; background interviews with key academicians, NGO workers, political leaders and workers, trade union workers, journalists and government officials. No special resource was required for this trip although a laptop computer would have been really useful. This trip was organised into four brief subsequent phases beginning with my arrival at Patna on 14th July 1993. I spent a fortnight (15-30th July) for initial contacts with academics, journalists, civil servants, and political actors in order to set up interviews and collect additional documentation. I prepared supplementary interview schedule for use in the village on case study families.

**Table 6.2: Chronology of Trips**  
(Supplementary Fieldwork in North and Central Bihar, 1993 & 1995)

Sequence of Trips	Frequency	Continuation	Year	Destination
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>North Bihar</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup> Phase	19 days	August 2 – 21	1993	Patna – Rupauli – Tikapatti and Return
2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase	14 days	October 9 – 23	1993	Patna – Katihar – Tikapatti and Return
<b>Central Bihar</b>				
3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase	10 days	November 2-12	1993	Patna – Jahanabad and Return
5 <sup>th</sup> Phase	7 days	December 12-19	1995	Patna – Jahanabad and Return

**Phase 1** (2-21 August, 1993): Revisit to Tikapatti and Rupauli block HQ for checking up gaps in numerical data in 155 sample survey; re-examining 'middle peasant' families in the provisional classification in order to identify which families are on a upward trajectory, and which on a downward. Identifying case study families from each category for further detailed discussions with women in those families according to the fresh Check List.

**Phase 2** (October 9 - 23): Selection of some other case study families, beyond 155 samples for further detailed discussion with women on gender-specific issues. Unstructured and informal interviews and talks with them. Ten additional stories discovered.

**Phase 3** (Central Bihar, November 2-12): Series of unstructured interviews with different categories of respondents (academicians, journalists, political actors, women leaders and

activists) in order to construe 'expert' ideas as well as to obtain grassroots information, on the dimensions of women's political behaviour at different levels and in arenas, and in order to identify further examples of key events, struggles, incidents in the villages and sub-divisional locations in Jahanabad district of central Bihar. The checklist of issues for use on case study families in Tikapatti were used as a guide for collecting these comparative, qualitative data from Jahanabad. However, the main 'method' here has been to investigate known incidents and stories rather than to interview 'representatives' of the population.

**Phase 4 (December 12-19, 1995):** A week long revisit to Jahanabad district in December 1995 aimed at assessing the situation of poor women in 'Nonahi', 'Nagwan', 'Damuha', and 'Khagari' villages. The purpose was to identify some features of agrarian change as well. Some new stories and some fresh incidents were recorded during this visit.

## **6. EVOLUTION OF THE THESIS**

In tracing the evolution of this thesis I need to look back in 1991. The initial conception of the proposed study has undergone a fair degree of quantitative and qualitative change. A sharp focus on changing faces of gender relations in the setting of structural changes initiated through the market emerged as the central theme in 1993 during first six month stint in Bath, qualitatively different but not deviant from the early conception of the research (in 1991) which was more inclined to structural changes, of which gender relational changes were perceived as a part. Being more specific the early conception had perceived gender issue as a derivative of the agrarian change, which was the 'central theme'. Now gender became 'view-finder'.

Extension of the coverage of study through inclusion of central Bihar for making a comparative analysis between north Bihar and central Bihar took place in 1993 - an evolution from the early conception of the thesis that was confined to north Bihar (Tikapatti village). The need for a comparative analysis emerged out of the grassroots material context of Bihar, where mobilisation has played (and is increasingly playing) a significant role in overall social change, consequentially giving passage to a fair degree of gender-relational change as well. The growing participation of women through gender-neutral class based mass organisations acquired a more sharp gender-specific edge with the emergence of women's outfits within class based radical mass organisational

structures. Thus, to engage with the question: how has mobilisation acted as a catalyst to change the gender relations no context could have been better than the central Bihar for a comparison.

Market and Mobilisation were thus sharply viewed as twin catalysts, mediators, agents for change, and Gender as the viewfinder, the keyhole, the central theme and the draft - 1995 was written with this scheme in mind.

The final evolution of thesis took place in tune with my own evolution as a gender person from a student of economics qualitatively broadened and sharpened this study without deviating from the previously evolved scheme. Thus changes in gender-relations, hitherto the central theme of the thesis, has evolved into 'liberation' of women as the culmination of this process of change in gender relations. Thus, liberation became the keyhole, the focus, the view finder - the central theme of the thesis; market and mobilization became the twin catalysts, the agents for gender-relational change; gender-relation became the framework; structural change, the setting, and north and central Bihar became the sites for this whole research venture.

## 7. THE WRITING UP

This research is funded by The Ford Foundation in New Delhi, India. The programme inverted the normal timetable for such research, with the main fieldwork conducted near the beginning of the activity. This was planned to enable me to embark on fieldwork during the period when my supervisor was also in the field in north Bihar. The programme then consisted of a subsequent six month period at the University of Bath, preparing background papers as draft chapters; a short return to Bihar for supplementary fieldwork in July 1992, followed by a year of thesis preparation and submission by December 1993.

Fieldwork commenced in February 1991 until October 1991. The original intention was for me to come to Bath in November 1991. However, I took a year long extension for some personal reasons and arrived at Bath in January 1993. It was planned for me to resume the original programme with new dates. Therefore, I returned to Bihar in early July 1993 for supplementary fieldwork.

I returned to Bath in December 1993 and resumed analysis and thesis preparation work. By late February 1994, I prepared a revised proposal and tentative outline of the chapters. I began working on my first draft of the thesis according to this chapter plan in March 1994. This meant trying to keep the original programme of 14 months write up with new dates beginning from March 1994. All the seven draft chapters (theoretical and empirical) excluding Introduction, Methodology and Conclusion were completed by April 1995. This was the precise time when the Ford Foundation Grant was finished.

Reviewing my progress as 'impressive' amidst serious constraints and interruptions my supervisor expected the penultimate draft of the thesis to take about 4-6 month time to get refined to the level of final submission and therefore, made a request to the Ford Foundation, New Delhi to sanction some supplementary grant to support this study to be completed. This was agreed.

It was just before the draft thesis was to be completed, a serious personal problem occurred at home calling for my immediate return to Patna. I had to fly back on 28th May 1995 disrupting my work at this crucial stage. I had expected to return to Bath by the year-end for next 4-6 months for completing the final version for an expected submission of the thesis by June 1996. This could not happen.

Meanwhile, two extensions, each of these of one-year stint (June 1996-97 and 1997-98) elapsed. This was finally decided that I should take up writing work at home and come to Bath only after the final version of the thesis is ready before hand. I resumed final writing up since November 1997. The analysis of the draft version written in 1994-95, now appeared as 'immature' and the schemes and focus as 'outdated', though orientation of the analysis was alive and qualitative data still valid for many more years. This encouraged me to strengthen the qualitative base of the analysis, while retaining the use of quantitative data for revealing the trends as more valid.

This was a critical time for me to decide, whether I should reproduce the 1994-5 draft refining it up to the level of a Ph D thesis or I should embark on what I was capable of writing at a more advanced stage of my consciousness on the subject. My conscience did not allow me produce 'old wine in new bottle', therefore, without much caring for which degree my writing is aimed at I began a complete re-write. This was entirely a different mindset; different from a normal need based career-conscious mindset. To me this thesis



could not remain just an intellectual production (as it was until 1995). I realised the whole process of writing up of this thesis as - a transformation from intellectual production to reproduction, where a fusion of instinctual and intellectual, i.e. of instinct and mind has taken place.

## 7.1 Data Processing

### Tikapatti

Out of 155 sample households, I have finally chosen 136 families accommodating 955 persons across all Classes and Groups on representative basis for creating the Income and Resource Profile Table (IRP table). This constitute 11 % of the total populace (8,486) residing in about 9 percent of the total households (1,555). Other 19 samples proved to be 'incompetent' for the IRP table, yet relevant for other analytical purposes. Besides, about 20 representative case profiles have been used in chapters eight, nine and ten. Tikapatti has a unique composition of households. I have collected different kinds of household cases, which explain different kind of social, economic, cultural, and political and market behaviour across different social and economic classes.

The IRP Table formed the basis for further statistical exercises for four empirical Chapters in Part – III. Other quantitative data relating to land-holding records, caste composition, wage, production are processed separately.

'Discrepancies in quantitative data' are a normal problem in empirical researches. For instance, the land measurement units locally vary in Bihar. To avoid serious confusions, I have used the local units, such as *Bihga* and *Kattha* in all empirical chapters. The standard units such as 'acres' and 'hectares' also vary in size. It is difficult to comprehend when the official records put the total geographical area of Tikapatti at 1434.19 hectares in 1991, how does total land occupied by different social groups according to Survey and Settlement Operation (1952-60) obtained from Rupauli block office come at 1949.43 acres. Such discrepancies in quantitative data are normal to find in Bihar due to serious lack of proper land record maintenance.

The Case Profiles used are of two types: some cases were selected out of the household samples and enriched further through repeated unstructured talks / interviews with the respondents during the 'primary phase' of the field work in 1991. Other cases were

located during 'supplementary phase' in 1993. The orientation has been to choose meticulously some cases demonstrating 'changes' in relationship between the genders; representing 'changes' in traditional work profile of both the genders; indicating 'changes' in women's overall behaviour revealing a sense of self-recognition, decisiveness, visibility, and assertiveness and men's responses to these. Individual as well as collective opinion have been obtained from men (from cross-sections of the society) about the less advantageous position of women (vis-à-vis men) and their growing stake for liberation from the same.

### **Jahanabad**

In central Bihar, the randomly collected case profiles, series of events pointing to the transformation of consciousness of poor women into political mobilisation, and alternative social institutions created at the grassroots in the process of overall mobilisation has been sharply focussed. The primary and ancillary data is processed, analysed, and presented in the form of a powerful journalistic 'story' of a militant society (Chapter-11), rather than a 'rigorous' research exercise. In this chapter, collective actions and events rather than individual 'case profiles' are more illuminating.

## **7.2 The Analysis: The Conversion of Experience into Expression**

The conversion of **experience** (in fieldwork context) into the final **expression** has not been an easy process, that too in a complex situation of large time gap of about 7 years (1991-98) between the two arbitrated by the qualitative knowledge and understanding gained during this period. This was made easier through going back to the first draft of the fieldwork - a rough manuscript - of what I studied in field. Positing that a researcher normally belongs to a distinct intellectual tradition (what Stanley Fish, 1980, quoted in Krishnaraj, 1988b calls an 'interpretive community'), I have tried to be as 'true' to my respondent's reality as was possible. In the process of being 'true' to my respondents, I have tried to 'own' their feelings, comprehend their 'tone behind their speech', feel 'them' within my own self and then to write about them - in fact, in a sense to write about myself as well. And, writing about myself often resulted in soul-searching, a quest for the right phrase, the correct expression and so on.

Writing about 'myself' reminds me of Max Weber's insistence on stating one's position, which is extremely instructive. Weber suggests that it is a 'straightforward requirement of intellectual integrity' to make a clear distinction between 'logically demonstrable or empirically observable facts' and 'practical value judgments' (Krishnaraj, 1988a). It is also relevant to quote here Harding (1987), who observes:

The best feminist analysis.....insists that the inquirer her / himself be placed in the same critical plane as the avert subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of the research.....introducing this 'subjective' element into analysis in fact increases the objectivity of the research and decreases the 'objectivism', which hides this kind of evidence from the public. (Harding, 1987:9 underscore mine)

## 8. CONCLUSION

Women's studies, as a field of study, is facing serious danger of losing its critical and transformative impulse and getting institutionalised within the very system it is fighting against. Apprehensions about the Women's studies becoming yet another oppressive and alienating scientific enterprise creating a new class of intellectual elite women engaged in academic exploitation of other women in the production of knowledge, cannot be ruled out. The women's struggles, therefore, need to work out a two-pronged strategy: one, to combat women's oppression and two, to combat such specialists in women's studies.

While the excessive academisation of women's protests threatens to neutralise the movement, the excessive activation of Women's studies can lead to dilution of scientific endeavour. Sensing and feeling these dual dangers of 'excessive academisation' and 'excessive activation', I have tried to create a balance between the two extremes through combining my subjective concern for the oppressed with the scientific rigour and dispassionate analysis about their situation.

### **PART – III**

#### **WOMEN LIBERATION: THE MARKET OPTION**

With this Part, I enter the main empirical site, the village Tikapatti. This largest part contains four chapters - seven, eight, nine and ten - all about the village. This village is a "key hole" for the region with diverse characteristics and in no way could be treated as a standard village scattered across north Bihar (Chapter Seven). The liberating potential of market is explored in "Women as Producers" context in Chapter Eight; "Women as Reproducers" context in Chapter Nine; and, what precisely these processes communicate about the emergence of women as "total beings" in Chapter Ten.

Chapter Eight explores how far are women able to establish their agency in productive regime. The associated enquiry in Chapter Nine is about how their stake as producers helps them assert stronger roles as reproducers. I argue that reproduction is the basic production process and production is the 'means' for sustaining this basic production process.

This is a 'reversal' of the established paradigm relating to production and reproduction, which assigns centre stage to the former and peripheral to the later.

Chapter Ten concludes with arguing for a feminine route to women liberation, which is likely to have strong potential to grow as a feminine route to human liberation.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN TIKAPATTI MODERN AND TRADITIONAL: UNITING, DIVIDING, EMERGING COMBINATIONS**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Tikapatti village is a model case for field study, where rural and urban cultures coexist. It is a village with all characteristics of a village society, yet accommodating fair degree of urbanisation. One can find a traditional set of values guiding people's lives and a modern set of values replacing the traditional one. New sets of values, at some places, have replaced the old one; at some other are blended with the old; and yet at some other, have produced peculiar combinations.

The agrarian relations are heterogeneous. The capitalist relations dominate in all forms of production relations, especially in cash crop sector and traditional production relations do persist in food sector. Cash payment predominates in rural markets, and kind payment mode simultaneously persists in informal transactions. *Jajmani* is transformed into marketable skill and a group of families surviving through *jajmani* system is still present. The incidence of labour migration is very high and number of migrants coming back to invest into farming at home is also remarkable. Rodgers<sup>1</sup> has recently argued that growth in western India reduces poverty in Bihar. Evidence from Tikapatti suggests that this is a belated recognition as the process of transformation of a group of marginal peasants into small peasants has been located during my fieldwork conducted in early 1990s, in same region.

Tikapatti, with such diverse characteristics, could be treated as a 'key hole' for the region as one can find some of these characteristics in one village, some other in the other. It is difficult to find such a unique combination at one place. Tikapatti, therefore, in no way could be treated as a standard village scattered across north Bihar.

In this chapter, I explore, how and in what ways and forms, the structural changes have transformed the village society since the inception of the new technology. This chapter relates to chapter five (above) as this presents the empirical site for north Bihar, where the conflicts between 'productive forces' and 'production relations', as I have argued (in Chapter 5), have appeared to be resolved through market options. This chapter also provides setting for next three chapters (eight, nine, and ten) which present the diverse analysis of how and in what ways and forms, market has acted as a 'catalyst' for creating 'liberating' conditions for women in the overall process of structural change.

## **2. THE GENERAL PROFILE AND BACKGROUND**

Tikapatti is distinct from a standard north Bihar village also from an agrarian structure viewpoint. The agrarian structure in 1950 was more of a 'raiyatwari'<sup>2</sup> type in the region, of which the village was a part as sustained struggle fought by Santhal<sup>3</sup> *bataidars* (Chakraborty, 1986; Hill, 1988) had already resulted in tenancy reforms. A brief digression into the history is essential to comprehend the present processes. A general overview of demographic, economic, social and political environment of the village is attempted in this section, before I begin to explore the present phase.

### **2.1 Demographic Profile: The Official Version**

Certain features are important to note in Tikapatti. Since the statistics (Appendix - 6A) relates to entire village that includes Chandpur *to/a* (see Chapter- 6) and I have to rely on this sole official version. It is the trends rather than figures that deserve more attention. The gender break up of the total population (8,933) suggests a masculinised sex ratio at 1000:899. The percentage of the main workers is 38.2 and the gender break up suggests a highly masculinised work regime with male constituting 76.18 percent and female only 23.82. The percentage of the cultivators is 35.5 and of the agricultural labourers are 55 (of the main workers category). While male constitute 96.4 percent of the cultivator's category, female are negligible with only 3.6 percent, though they constitute about 40 percent of the agricultural labourer category. The marginal workers are 248: of this, just 6 are male while 242 are female. The non-workers are 5273: of this, 2099 are male and 3174 are female. This reveals that women are significant in marginal workers category, while they outpace men in unemployed category (of the 59 percent unemployed women

constitute 35.5 while men 23.5). These figures, however, do not corroborate to actual demographic features of the village as the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the primary fieldwork speak a different version. This is evident through out this part of the thesis.

Tikapatti is densely<sup>4</sup> populated, which is important in a situation when about 30 percent (420.49 hectare) of the total land comes under 'not available for cultivation' category<sup>5</sup>. This increases the overall intensity and pressure over farming. The official percentage of irrigated land is only 14.10 (202.34 hectares) and un-irrigated area 811.36 hectares. This hardly corroborates to the reality of growing private provisions in irrigation sector, mainly through bamboo borings, the locally devised cheaper and most suited technology of 'shallow tube well' (STW) system (see 3).

## **2.2 The Evolution<sup>6</sup> and Ecology-induced Tenancies**

The present Tikapatti village was a part of Dharampur paragona<sup>7</sup> of the Darbhanga *raj* (estate). Ecologically, Dharampur was a segment of huge *diara* (delta) region of the Kosi river, which traversed this estate from 1770 onwards. The Kosi had been changing its courses flowing over once flourishing settlements and throwing wide areas open for new settlements<sup>8</sup>. The cultivation potential in such ecological conditions was severely restricted. This acute problem found its solution in a unique and adaptive ecology-induced cultivating tenorial system<sup>9</sup>, capable of accommodating volatile cropping areas, encouraging production, minimising pressure on the peasant's productive capabilities, and ultimately aid the estate by reclaiming fertile fields from the jungle (Hill, 1987). The erratic behaviour of Kosi exposed the main paddy crop to the constant danger of destruction until 1893, when the river radically changed its course towards the west. The region, after then got transformed into a fertile tract (Chakraborty, 1986) making the cultivating prospects predictable by 1911.

## **2.3 The Multiplex Tenorial System**

The ecological location made Dharampur an outpost<sup>10</sup>, estranged from the rest of Tirhut estate, which was located in the heart of north Bihar. Though legally integrated into administrative and revenue functioning of the British, the *de facto* agrarian control of Dharampur remained in the hands of local intermediaries who constituted a 'multiplexed

subordinate tenorial system<sup>11</sup> (MSTS henceforth) developed by the *raj* (Sengupta and Ahmad, 1978; Sengupta, 1986, Yadav, 1990) itself<sup>12</sup>.

This system isolated the *raj*, oppressed the *raiya*s (cultivators) and allowed intermediaries to entrench enough to gain from land. The cultivators and the *raj* both were drained out by them<sup>13</sup>. Dharampur, thus continued to remain in an anomalous state, under *de jure* administration of the British, but *de facto* control of the MSTS.

The local agrarian structure in Dharampur, hence suggests a deviation from a classical Marxist model. The classical Marxist scheme of agrarian structure identifies 'zamindar' as the 'intermediary class' located between the colonial rule, at the top, and poor peasants (that included subsistence land-owners, share-croppers with or without some land, and agricultural labourer with or without some homestead land), at the bottom. Here, the intermediary class has been the multiplexed groups of middlemen (MSTS), locally known as *malik* placed between absentee Darbhanga *raj*, at the second top position and the poor peasants (a composite of subsistence land-owners, share-croppers with or without some land and agricultural labourer with or without some homestead land), at the bottom, locally known as *bataidar*. Hence, the principal relations of production, in Dharampur, involved 'malik' and 'bataidar'. It was in this local context that Chakraborty (1986) identified the principal contradiction during Santhal *bataidari* struggle<sup>14</sup> in this region, as between the 'malik' and the 'bataidar', instead of the 'state' and the 'estate-owners' who were nowhere directly involved in this struggle. This fierce class struggle during 1938-42 succeeded in procuring some concrete economic gains for the tillers such as provisions for occupancy rights to be established on the basis of on-the-spot investigation and eliminating of other forms of exploitation.

## 2.4 Transfer of Power and Market in Land (1950s-70s)

Those who happened to be our (landlord's) *banihars* (servants) once upon a time, later became 'buyers' of our land.....they still continue to be.....and which caste they belong to? .....Yadava, Dhanuk, Paswan, and Gorhi, the dominant among these are Yadavas!

This is stated by one of the present generation rich farmers. Many of them come from the family trees of those 'petty' tenants, who got title over land during Survey and Settlement (1901-8) and who substantially elevated their social status via economic status, then,



breaking a firm caste-class congruence<sup>15</sup>. The old villagers informed that 'those' who were given land in 1903 also got right over large tracts in 1954-56 after *zamindari* abolition. Who were 'those'? Most of them were tenants from *Kaivarth* caste, who still claim to be the 'traditional' *raiya* of this village. This suggests the thriving of industrious tenantry in this village since early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The statement above, however, highlights two striking facts: one how the land reform induced market in land; and the other, the emergence of Yadav caste people, as the second dominant social group that could be attributed to this market in land. The impacts of zamindari abolition and tenancy reforms, after the transfer of power, were little different in Tikapatti. Here, the landowner's strategy for securing maximum gains, before the ceiling act could have pushed them in a position of loss<sup>16</sup>, was to dispose of their 'threatened' and 'unattainable' plots<sup>17</sup> at cheaper rates. They sold out and settled such plots with same cultivating *raiya*s. It is this 'desperate market' in land, reported by one of the grandchildren of the ex-*maliks* that is quoted above.

The Survey and Settlement Operation (1952-60) recorded fairly good number of *bataidar* families, in Tikapatti and nearly half of them were recorded as occupancy *raiya*s. This helped the village acquire a moderate agrarian structure dominated by rich and middle peasantry much before the new technology visited this village.

This could be further substantiated by the fact that only 40.03 acres of ceiling surplus land was available for redistribution during 1960s, as per the survey records. This was redistributed among 116 landless families, most of them *harijan* (Table - 7.1).

Table -7.1 Redistributed Ceiling Surplus Land

Beneficiary Castes	Total Area Occupied (In Acres with % To total)	Number of Occupants (With % to total)	Average Holding Size
Harijan	29.41 (73.46)	62 (52.44)	0.47
Mandal	5.42 (13.51)	24 (20.68)	0.22
Bania	3.14 (7.84)	20 (17.24)	0.15
Yadav	2.06 (5.14)	10 (8.62)	0.20
Total	40.03 (100.00)	116 (100.00)	0.26

Source: The Survey Records (1952-60)

The number of big landholders owning above 40 acres recorded in the Survey was seven. They together owned 421.23 acres (Table-7.2). However, in 1993, villagers reported about at least eight big landowners, who together occupied more than a thousand *bighas* and their large tracts were also located in other villages.

Table – 7.2 List of Big Landowners

Ser. & Name of Landowners (with > 40 acres)	Acres Occupied (With % to total)
1. Baje Mandal	97.55
2. Prayag Das Chaudhary	64.13
3. Chhanguri Baitha	53.10
4. Jagdeo Mandal	52.90
5. Chandradeo Singh	64.63
6. Hari Pd Yadav	45.37
7. Mukhay Mandal	43.55
Total	421.23 (21.60)

Source: The Survey Records (1952-60)

A careful study of the official records in conjunction with primary data suggests that many rich and middle peasant families of 1990s were either direct descendants of family trees of the big landowners of 1950s, or came from their extended families. These families diversified into non-farming sector after *zamindari* abolition.

## 2.5 Fragmentation and Reconsolidation

Land fragmentation involves two processes: the break up of larger farms into smaller ones; and of plot division, though the former process often entails the latter. Land, is not just area but soil quality, elevation and flooding characteristics, and location both from homestead and from other plots, affecting management logistics (Wood, 1994). Along with these material characteristics, emotional considerations are also attached with land<sup>18</sup>. The feeling of being a landowner means feeling of being rooted in 'soil' and of being a 'landless' means being uprooted!

The land fragmentation in Tikapatti took place via two routes: the legislative, through land reforms; and the natural, through demographic pressure. However, a process of land reconsolidation has also been taking place simultaneously over three decades. A comparative study of plot sizes owned by some of the landowners recorded in Survey (1952-60) as well as in my primary data (1991-93) provide evidence to the process of

Table-7.3 Reconsolidation and Fragmentation of Land (1960-91)

Ser. No	Name of Peasants	Holding Size (in acres) As per Survey Records (1952-60)	Holding Size (in acres) As per Field Survey (1991-93)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>The Gainers</b>			
1.	Satyanarain Mandal	0.71	6.5
2.	Jainarain Mandal	1.54	5
3.	Sukhay Mandal	2.09	4
4.	Sudhir K Mandal	0.17	20
5.	Upendra Mandal	1.90	9
6.	Madan Mandal	5.71	12
7.	Brahmadeo Mandal	0.88	9
8.	Pratap Narain Mandal	0.77	6
9.	Virendra K Mandal	1.84	15
10.	Janardan Mandal	5.05	10
11.	Khokha Mandal	1.02	22
12.	Uma Devi Mandal (F)	7.14	12
13.	Veer Narain Mandal	0.94	15
14.	Nandkishore Chaudhary	16.51	60
15.	Krishna M Chaudhary	4.58	45
16.	Dinesh Pd Chaudhary	9.80	18
17.	Butan Yadav	9.25	35
18.	Upendra Pd Yadav	18.53	125
19.	Anuplal Mandal	9.38	12
20.	Purushottam Kesari	7.78	13
21.	Naresh Chandra Kesari	4.43	12
Total		110.02	465.5
<b>The Losers</b>			
1.	Chandradeo Mandal	64.53	40
2.	Hari Pd Yadav	45.37	41
3.	Draupadi Devi	13.00	5
4.	Krityanand Mandal	12.00	7
5.	Tarini Pd Nirjhar	50.00	20
Total		184.90	113

Source: The Survey (1952-60) and Primary data (1991-93)

'gaining' and 'losing' of land (Table-7.3 above). Column. 2 (Table-7:3) presents the land ownership after legislation-induced fragmentation and col. 3 reveals a reconsolidation process, which augmented the size of plots in most cases up to three and a half time to what it is in col. 2 among the 'gainers'. The case of the 'losers' suggest a reversed process, though they have lost only by 40 percent at an average of what it is in col.2.

What contributed to these processes? There could be many factors but the single factor contributing most to this appears to be 'desperate market' in land. Distress sale, settling of some of the share cropped land at far lower to the market rates, disposal of land for investing into non-farm activities, upper-tier migration necessitating disposal of some land

due to 'manageability' variable or otherwise, flowing back of the small remittances into land by lower tier migrants etc. all appear to contribute to these dual processes.

## 2.6 Relaxed Caste Structure

Relaxed caste structure is a precondition for social and cultural entrepreneurial behaviour and freedom of manoeuvre - the case of Tikapatti is evidence to this. The relaxed caste structure in this middle caste dominated society that upholds moderate social values has been crucial in making the social and economic life more enterprising as well as developing enthusiasm for accommodating change. The development of

Table-7.4 Caste Composition of Land Occupancy

Name of Castes	Number of Occupants	Percentage to Total
Mandal	629	60.47
Harijan	151	14.51
Yadav	125	12.01
Bania	114	10.96
Others	21	2.05
Total	1040	100.00

Source: The Survey (1952-60)

market opportunities could be seen in this cultural context as well. The *kaivarth* caste people, known as Mandals, unquestionably prevailed in all spheres of life till seventies. They constituted above 60 percent of the total land occupants (1040) until early seventies. It is interesting to note that *Harijan* constituted the second numerous (14.51%) land occupants, followed by *Yadav* (12%) and *Bania* (11%). Though the latter is a non-agriculturist caste mainly engaged in trade and business (Table-7.4 above).

Mandals claim to be the traditional tenants in Tikapatti. Their caste status is at par with those who are called *Kurmi* in other parts of the state. This middle caste group has occupied dominant status in economic and political spheres in Bihar. Colebrook (in Mitra and Vijayendra, 1982) in 1884 traces the origin of Mandals as a dominant tenant class, which came from the group of rich people 'monopolising' land for re-letting it to the actual cultivators at an advanced rent at half of the produce. This tenant class known as *jeth raiyats*, *muqquddams* and *mandals* (emphasis mine) was easy to identify in the villages of Dharampur. The frugality and industrious nature of this middle caste group in this area

had enabled some of them becoming better off than their upper castes tenant counterparts.

The Yadavas, traditionally, a pure agriculturist, cattle-breeder and milk-seller caste constitutes the other dominant middle caste in Bihar. A significant change has brought about in village society with the growing strength of Yadavas over last decades. With the ascendance of one of their caste fellows as the chief minister of the state<sup>19</sup>, their arrogance is threatening the erstwhile culturally sophisticated and peaceful social environment of the village. This has serious implications for women (Chapter 8).

The petty *bataidars* from the lower caste groups, such as *Teir, Dhanuk, Gangot, Paswan, Gorhi, and Teli* cultivated tiny plots before seventies. They were evicted because, their 'inability to pay' did not allow them retain those tiny plots they were cultivating, while it were put on 'distress sale' (2.4 above). It was this group of labourers which constituted the first 'migrants' from Tikapatti in early seventies.

## 2.7 The Political Landscape

The political landscape can still be identified with Gandhian ideology, well entrenched and deep rooted in social and political culture of the village. Many *Charkha* (spinning wheel) centres exist to provide supplementary source of income to some men and women in village. An old Gandhian, Ramnarayan Toofan, of Tikapatti, runs a *Khadi* (hand spun cloth) centre at Rupauli.

This peace-loving, harmonious, and enterprising society is now facing a kind of crisis that it never had before. The Congress party suffered serious blow with the non-Congress parties ascending to power in the mid-60s. The Communist Party of India (CPI) penetrated the village in early 70s. The Indian People's Front, the front organisation of the CPI (ML) visited Tikapatti in mid-80s. All these 'new visitors' did nothing 'wrong' though all ideologically differed from a Gandhian way of thinking. It is the 1991 elections that radically changed the political mosaic by electing a Janata Dal<sup>20</sup> candidate from Rupauli assembly constituency with support from *Yadava* caste voters. The elected 'member of the legislative assembly' (MLA) had been elected before as a CPI member. It were same *Yadavas* who constituted support base for him before. Yet, nothing was

wrong. What changed in 1991? The party. The village is now an intense site for power politics and here, traditional is on the defensive because 'modern' is abruptly aggressive!

### **3. MODERN AND TRADITIONAL: EMERGING COMBINATIONS (1970s - 1990s)**

The villagers express their views about structural changes in different ways. The common reaction to change is 'agriculture was unscientific and traditional before' dependent on mercy of the nature; now it is scientific and modern'. Some say that modern has 'annihilated' traditional without adequately substituting the former; yet some other say that modern and traditional have walked together! All these views carry some stance of the fact that change has continually occurred. Before I explore the 'changes', it is essential to address the changing criteria of the basic agrarian structure, the farmer's classification.

#### **3.1 Peasantry Classification: The Changing Criteria**

The traditional proxy of landholding<sup>21</sup> as the key index of class differentiation, in the context of an overall downward shift in household access to owned land as well as diversification of the household economic activities into non-farming sector, appears to be now less reliable. This is certainly a preliminary conclusion from Tikapatti.

This analytic awareness creates a problem since farmer classification is both a methodological instrument for proceeding to the next stage of analysis as well as a major analytic conclusion for the whole research (Wood, 1994). Thus, the modified principal of 'effective landholding' may still constitute the key principle for distinguishing between households.

My definition of 'effective holding' excludes fallow, temporarily uncultivable farms for what so ever reasons. It includes the total quantity of land put under cultivation irrespective of its 'ownership'. Leasing and mortgaging, incorporated into the effective landholding indicator play significant in augmenting or reducing the holding size put for cultivation. With a fair practice of tenancy effective holding represents some notion of process in farmer classification.

Wood (1992) further suggests that the class differentiation in such a dynamic context needs to be analysed as a stratification, (i.e. categories of wealth, income and status) through which families move up and down.

Patnaik (1987) has devised an alternative<sup>22</sup> set of empirical criterion for the household classification. These are: extent of ownership of land and other means of production; extent of exploitation through labour hiring or other means; and level of subsistence and / or income. For empirical purposes in research the second criteria, she suggests, may be taken as the principal one, with the other two being used as supplementary.

### 3.1.1 Empirically Evolved Agrarian Classes

Tikapatti presents a diversified model of an agrarian society with 'pure' agrarian classes, as its important component. Diversification of economic activities into non-farm sectors across classes is another obvious feature. Within farming sector, diversion of best quality of land and other resources likely to be invested in cash farming, leads to a situation, where the most 'effective holding' could be found in banana plantation. These two features need to be emphasised in devising a set of criteria for farmer's classification. Besides, there is a need to incorporate the Resource Profile Approach, resource that one owns and resource that is accessible via network, to analyse classes as stratification. A set of criteria is introduced here to distinguish between the 'farmers', as follows:

- Effective landholding and other means of production;
- Extent of labour exploitation through family labour/ hired labour/ and share cropping;
- Income and Resource Profile of a household.

I have prepared the Income and Resource Profile (Appendix 7A) Table (IRP henceforth) of altogether 136 households, through which I attempt to exhibit the complex evolving of the households into 'classes' as well as 'stratification'. The IRP is presented under two broad economic groups. A preliminary distinction is made on the basis of the primary source of income of a household. The former group represents households with farming as their primary income-source (along with / without other additional sources), while the later represents those with non-farming as their primary income-source (along with

farming as additional source). Hence, the total households are vertically divided into two broad economic groups: Pure Group (PG) and Composite Group (CG).

The households are horizontally divided into five classes in the PG, ranging from a small group of big landowners (with above 100 acres of land) at the top, to about 40 percent (of the total populace) marginal farmers and landless labourer, together, at the base. In between these two extremes are located rich, middle and small farmers. In the CG, however, big landowning class is absent, so it contains only four classes. The total households can therefore be horizontally divided across all the classes (but big landowner) by each of these Pure and Composite groups.

Some important conclusions derived from a careful study of the IRP are:

- The CG is economically better than its PG counterparts across all the classes and obviously, it is so due to secure and often higher income from non-farming sector.
- The PG may have more land owned per household, the income and wealth of the CG, even then exceeds the PG's, within identical class statuses.
- The income of the CG per household from farming, however, is usually 'lower' than the PG, with identical holding size owned.
- The PG is more inclined to banana farming, than its CG counterparts across the middle and rich farming classes.
- The richest (among the rich farmers) are those households from the CG, which take up banana farming as well and they are only a few.
- The CG acquires more wealth and status goods, but the local power and networking capabilities are best acquired by the rich farmers in the PG.



- A small group consists of those who derive their livelihood from purely non-farming activities and have no land resource as such. They join the composite group because of their multifarious off-farm economic activities.
- The artisans are of two kinds: one who depend on *jajmani* for their sustenance, while the form of *jajmani* is traditional; and the other, who have transformed the *jajmani* skills into marketable services. The member of this group is accommodated across different classes, in both the economic groups, i.e. PG and CG.
- The quantitative gap between the land (owned) and land put under cultivation (effective holding) is not significant in static terms. It becomes significant in dynamic contexts of transaction and market in land through leasing and mortgaging of different nature and kind (see 3.2) in the production processes.
- It is the small peasant and landless classes, which emerge as the significant 'gainer' in terms of 'effective holding'. The dominant mode of labour exploitation in this most numerous class is the 'family labour' - the backbone of the household economy.
- Family labour emerges as the dominant form of labour, followed by sharecropping and hired labour, subsequently. The extent of labour exploitation could be seen in this context.

### 3.1.2 Class Relations: The Changing Paradigm

When class relations are analysed in this more complex, yet realistic, way, then an interesting theoretical problem for the Marxian paradigm of 'class relation' is created. Land clearly remains the most significant means of production in the countryside, yet the ownership of this means of production does not necessarily bestow unequivocal power within the local political economy. The point here is that, landowners as a class are losing monopoly aspects of control over labour and other features of the economy, as the agricultural production system becomes increasingly re-articulated around the provision of services as a precondition for the productivity of land. Here a distinction as well as

linkage between investing in agricultural productivity and investing in agricultural services (Wood, 1994) needs to be emphasised and carefully examined.

While new opportunities for rent seeking, incomes and profit taking arise through the provision of those services; these opportunities are likely to be seized by those with the capital to enter such markets, including landowners. The exchange and competitive element of such markets do not *a priori* exclude other classes or arbitrarily fix the prices for these services as under erstwhile monopolistic conditions. The rural class relation, in this context, could be better characterised by the use of capital in the sphere of exchange rather than production (Wood, 1992) which has effectively raised the level of absolute surplus value accruing to certain classes, but which is not currently contributing to the generation of productive agricultural capital and the real subsumption of labour under capital.

### 3.2 Emerging Tenancy Patterns

The renting of land is even more convenient for pure capitalism, for the fullest, freest, and most 'ideal' adaptation to the market, than is ownership of land. Why? Because private ownership of land hampers, its transfer from hand to hand, hinders the adaptation of land tenure to the conditions of the market, perpetuates ownership of the land by a particular family or person and his heirs, even if they are bad farmers. Renting is a more flexible form, under which the adaptation of land tenure to the market takes place most simply, most easily and most rapidly. (Lenin, 1973: 145, in the context of 'Nationalisation of Land' Debate in Britain, emphasis original).

The importance of renting of land for adaptation of market is well expressed in Lenin's version and this provides some insights into the complex rent market in land in Tikapatti. Wood (1992) argues that in each epoch, the tenancy arrangements chosen represent a rationalist<sup>23</sup> approach to land use under prevailing conditions of ownership and technology. Tenancy is also a social device to overcome the problems of land management in an agrarian set up where plots are scattered over the village area or at a further distance lying in other villages. Share cropping, in such a situation, serves the best option for land-use.

The land reforms led reorganisation of land, transformed *raiya*s into the rich peasants (Wood, 1973) and some of the rich peasants into the rural capitalists (Wood, 1984). This also led to simultaneous proletarianisation of the poor peasantry and necessitated large-

scale labour outmigration in a shrinking employment situation, at home. This 'escape' route to survival from early seventies obviously created labour shortage at home. The overall downward shift in land owned per household as well as 'fear<sup>24</sup>' of ceiling legislations, initially, led to a sharp decline in traditional share cropping, but after sometime it began to be practised in concealed form under different names and in varied forms. Some studies (Wood, 1973, 1992; Brass, 1993) in other parts of Purnea district also observed a decline in conventional sharecropping. My findings suggest a revival of conventional share-cropping in modern forms with some of the vestiges of the old system as well as introduction of new forms of formal legal tenancies.

The incidence of tenancy increased later for two reasons: the permanent nature of labour shortage, as migration became a survival strategy and peasant's diversification in non-farming occupations. In a labour shortage situation, while middle and small peasants had to opt for a more rigorous engagement of the family labour, the rich peasants were left with no option but to lease-out a part of their holdings and take up capital-intensive mechanised self-cultivation for other parts. With diversifying in non-farming occupations, the composite group (CG) was left with the single available option to lease out for retaining<sup>25</sup> land as well as gaining something out of it. The most recent factor, the banana plantation necessitated a 'hike' in formal kind of leasing arrangements. The tenancy-patterns have remarkably changed over time. The conventional '*bata*' system is now replaced by reverse tenancies, contractual tenancies and other kind of formal legal leasing arrangements, especially in cash sector.

### 3.2.1 Reverse Tenancies: New Conditions for Appropriation

Reverse tenancies occur with smaller farmers leasing out to richer ones, especially during seasons that require relatively highly investment costs in ploughing, irrigation, seed, fertilizer and weeding labour. Two kind of reverse tenancies are widely practiced in Tikapatti, known as '*sudbharana*' and '*kathakewla*', though it is open to question, whether these may 'rightly' be called reverse tenancies.

Under *sudbharana* poor peasants surrender cultivating rights on their own plots to the rich peasant, often the creditor, in lieu of loan taken from them. The creditor continues to cultivate these plots until the debtor's balance is paid back. This arrangement, if agreed between the parties, may be *ekbarasa* (of one year duration) and may be *tinbarasa*

(extended up to three years). In case, the loan still remains unpaid, this can be extended to next three years. The landowner, in return, gets a part of either produce or money or both as agreed between the parties.

Under *kathakewla* the poor plot owner has to enter into a 'conditional' reverse tenancy arrangement with the same normal agreements as in case of *sudbharana* but with a condition that if the debtor's loan is not recovered within stipulated time, the creditor has a right to seize the plot. This is a modified form of land appropriation in lieu of loan.

Though 'reverse', method-wise, it is open to question whether this system could be called reverse tenancy. It appears that *sudbharana* is a revised form of old system of appropriating land in lieu of unpaid loan. While the old system allowed appropriation of land, the new allows seizure of cultivating right. *Kathakewla* allows seizure of land as well. The basic difference is, while the old system involved coercion, the new creates condition for appropriation, though leaving some exit points in these processes.

### **3.2.2 Contractual Tenancies**

Many kind of contractual tenancy arrangements have evolved over time. Land is leased-out to poor (peasants and labourers) on share cropping basis and / or on annually fixed amount of money. Such arrangements may or may not include partial cost of production; cost of land improvement may or may not be shared by both the parties. This more flexible and moderate forms of contractual tenancies are widely practiced by the 'composite group' of households, where men are usually engaged in full time non-farming jobs staying away from village.

### **3.2.3 Formal Legal Leasing**

Formal legal leasing is introduced in banana plantation. The tenancy contracts between the parties are signed at the revenue administration office located at Dhamdaha. With this, the community based trust and informal rental transaction in land is replaced by a trust over the legal system and in formal rental deeds. The formal legal leasing arrangements were introduced with the entry of the 'outsiders' from distant places in banana production. This consequently began to be practiced by the villagers as well. The most revealing aspect is the practice of pure capitalist form of legal formal leasing

arrangements in banana sector and prevalence of informal forms of leasing in food sector. A sharp formal-informal divide between the two sectors is obvious.

### 3.3 Shifting Cropping-Pattern: Food and Cash Sectors Sharp Divided

The cropping pattern has undergone a radical change in both food and cash sectors. The village traditionally has been a fine rice-growing<sup>26</sup> area and paddy remained the main food crop until early seventies. Maize and wheat were other important crops. Tobacco and jute were main cash crops. Bamboo and chilli were other cash crops. *Tori* (mustard seeds) was the main oilseed and *arahar* and *khesari*, the main pulses (lentils). Mango and *lichie* were the main traditional fruits.

The new technology package initially assured wheat along with paddy to become the main food crops, though the traditional importance of paddy gradually declined with a decline in production over last two decades. The main reason for this, as informed by the farmers, is prolonged water-logging in the fields due to recurrent floods. Area under groves of mango and *lichie* also reduced. The new visitor banana has replaced Jute. The traditional cropping pattern radically changed in favour of wheat and maize as main food crops; banana as the main cash crop; and potato and bamboo as the additional cash crops. The grove area under bamboo, mango and *lichie*, despite a decline occupy good acres. This is reflected in the IRP (Appendix 7A). *Sheesham* (a kind of timber producing tree) is planted in limited acres.

The striking feature of this change, however, is a sharp division between food and cash sectors. This is important because, cash cropping is as traditional practice in Tikapatti as the food cropping is. The gender division in labour and farming management were never as sharp as it is now. While food sector predominantly appears to be feminised, the cash sector is predominantly masculinised in terms of production, management and labour processes. I focus this emerging genderisation in farming in chapter (8) below.

The overall process of shift of food sector resources, such as land and other inputs towards banana sector has been phenomenal over less than a decade (between mid-80s to early 90s). The prime instigator of which are market opportunities and assured profit (4 below). This has created a sharp cleavage between the food and cash sectors.

The yield trends vary significantly both by crops and resource position. While wheat and maize recorded 25-30 percent increase over last two decades (1970-2 to 1991-3), other food crops recorded marginal increase. The yield trend shows a decline for paddy. Many reasons, such as land fragmentation, dispersed pattern of holdings, frequent floods and lack of proper arrangements for draining out water are explained. However, my fieldwork suggests that transfer of good quality elevated land from food to banana sector, without regard to the balance between the two sectors, is also important. There are many arguments in favour of transfer of good quality land from food to banana sector. For instance, rich peasants argue that only a 'fraction' of the cultivable plot is put for banana. They also argue that food crops do not 'return' even the total cost, therefore, transfer to banana facilitates them to divert a part of their income into the food sector. This appears to be a 'rational' approach, though petty farmers (of both the genders), mainly engaged in food production, do not agree. They instead argue that banana is 'sucking' food sector. How production varies by resource position of a farmer is evident from Table-7.5 below.

Table - 7.5 Production Variations by Resource Position

	Rich farmer (With HYV seeds & Chemical Fertilizers)	Small farmer (With local seeds & Compost Manures)
	Production (in quintals / per acre)	
Main Food Crops		
Wheat	10	5-6
Paddy	10-11	8
Maize	10-12	8-9

Source: Primary Data from Tikapatti

It is not the weakness of the traditional seed varieties and manures *per se* that puts a small farmer on lower productivity scale but their weak resource position that inhibits exploration and innovation in traditional methods of multifarious farming. The farmers inform that *domat* quality of soil is fertile enough to grow three crops via traditional methods, provided, good network is available to facilitate irrigation and other inputs. Low land is good for wheat, paddy and *jethua* quality of maize. This quality of maize is possible to grow in low land with poor quantity of manures and fertilizers as opposed to standard maize grown through modern techniques, which requires elevated land, high quantity of fertilizers and irrigation. A better network can facilitate irrigation and other inputs enabling the farmers grow 2-3 crops a year in food sector.

### 3.4 Production Technique: Uniting Modern and Traditional

Farming involves a tractor-plough combined technique. Modern tractorisation co-exists with traditional plough. Krishana Mohan Chaudhari bought first tractor<sup>27</sup> in Tikapatti in 1969. The rental charge for a tractor was then Rs 40-45 per *bigha*. In 1993, the village had 8 tractors, 25 threshers, 10 mills for dehusking paddy, 2 oil mills and 3 floor mills. The other owners are Nandlal Mandal, Ashok and Arun Kr Mandal (the joint owners), Chandradeo Singh, Butan Yadav, Lalbahadur Mandal, Vinod Mandal and Ajay Kr Mandal. All the eight owners are upper middle, rich peasants and big landowners (Appendix 7A) from the 'pure group'. The rental charge in 1993 was Rs 110 per *bigha*.

#### 3.4.1 Irrigation: Private Provisions

Tikapatti is located within command area of the eastern Kosi canal system. The impact of Kosi irrigation project came by 1970 and rich farmers reaped its benefits. The farmers reported that the Kosi canal system is now, practically, in a defunct stage for majority of the farmers. It exists for only a few chosen plots, the location and elevation of which are accessible to the canal sources.

Another public provision, the 'lift-irrigation' also failed. The 'small farmer's development scheme' (SFDS), that was launched in early 70s provided limited irrigation facilities to some farmers. This helped paddy crops (Singh, 1983). The imperative to use land more intensively in the context of a downward shift in landholding per household has now increased demand for irrigation.

Even in the early seventies, when canals were the main source of large-scale irrigation, field level traditional practices persisted and farmers opted out of the cumbersome<sup>28</sup> canal system by using borings and mechanical pump sets. With strong bureaucratic rent seeking position over farmers and without resort to a moral sense of community through which farmers might exert voice over official providers, private provision via tube well borings and pump sets became the exit solution (Wood, 1999).

Ecology and hydrological conditions "cooperated" with this solution. The high water table began to be accessed to feed the fields via local technology of bamboo borings with diesel fed pump sets creating the cheapest accessible private<sup>29</sup> source of irrigation. The

boring and pump set alternative not only offers an effective substitute for the canal source, but it complements the same as well in bringing those plots under irrigation which could not be reached through the canal gravity flow system. Good rainfall, in addition, helps in problem-solving but recurrent floods bring "devastation" almost every year. The real problem, an effective management of enormous water resources, for which Kosi project was launched, is still unresolved.

### **3.4.2 Chemical Fertilizer and Local Manure**

Suresh Kesari, a youth from a rich peasant family was first to introduce chemical fertilizers in early 70s. It took time to convince his father that chemical fertilizer was not a 'demon' that would destroy his 'sacred' land. Kesari informs that it proved to be a challenge as his father gave him only one *bigha* land for this 'dangerous' experiment on condition that if he fails, he will never be allowed to repeat it. The bumper harvest<sup>30</sup> on the plot convinced his father that it was not a 'demon'. Other farmers followed him. The use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, weedicides etc. became widespread within next few years, of course, severely restricted to one's access to these inputs, which largely depended on one's resource profile position. While rich farmers almost replaced local manures by chemical fertilizers, poor still have to rely on the former due to affordability factor. The local compost manure is also depleting due to dwindling cattle because of less acres left for fodder and excessive floods visiting the village almost every year.

It is amazing that by early nineties many farmers have started feeling that regular and excessive use of chemical fertilizers has really proved to be a 'demon' for land as it has seriously affected fertility. What Kesari's father apprehended in the seventies due to 'ignorance', now appears to be recognised after long experience.

## **4. OUTMIGRATION: SURVIVAL AND STATUS ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES**

A significant change in Tikapatti from early seventies is the extent of labour outmigration to the high growth regions of western India in pursuit of agricultural labouring opportunities<sup>31</sup>. Although many cases of unemployed youths moving into other non-skilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs across the lower and upper tier labour markets in rural as well as in urban areas are located, the main opportunities are in agriculture. The concepts of upper and lower tier (labour market) are developed by Bardhan (1989). The



former consists of those employed in organised private and public sectors on a more or less regular basis at wages or salaries adjusted with changes in the cost of living. The latter covers the vast sectors of agriculture labour, construction and coolie labour of all kinds, farmed-out piece-wage work, wage-labour in small units, and all kinds of service workers hired on a casual basis without job security and workers benefits and at wages that are below the legal minimum; referred to as the informal, unorganised sector or secondary labour market.

#### 4.1 Lower Tier Labour Migration: Towards A 'Rational' Choice

The lower tier labour migration for prolonged periods as survival strategy began in seventies and remained phenomenal at least until mid-80s. This process was thwarted since mid-80s as many of them had to return home with poor health and despair mental state, after their labouring potential was 'sucked' in the high growth regions. Banana farming, in this situation, generated some hope.

Tarini Prasad Nirjhar, an old historian of the village informed that about 80 percent of the landless male labour including poor peasants migrated to Punjab over this period. Some of them later took away their families. Seasonal migration takes place from small peasant families with 4-5 *bigha* lands as well. At least one youth, with high school level education, migrate from such families for a few years. The strategy is to elevate economic condition through investing the saving in land. The informal estimate puts this figure in between 150 to 200 people.

Studies about the consumption behaviour of the migrant labourers in Bihar have established that they are prone to squander their savings away on consumption and falling into the trap of perpetual migration for meeting their survival needs. Tikapatti deviates from this normal finding position, though not completely. Many migrant labourers could be located here, who have elevated their economic condition to the level of small peasants through generating sustainable source of livelihood through investing their savings in buying a small plot of land or starting a small trade or acquiring ownership of their mortgaged land after repaying loans. I describe this as a process of transformation from a marginal to small peasant. I have located and compiled (Table-7.6 below) some of these cases. Though they share commonalities, each of these may constitute a unique story.

Table - 7.6 A Group of Transformed Migrants in Tikapatti

Name of The Farmer	Class Status (before migration)	Duration Of Migration (in yrs)	Total Saving (in Rs)	Investment in Assets Creation	
				Kind of Asset	Cost(in Rs)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Anil Paswan	Landless	2	20,000	Loan paid for mortgaged land (1 <i>bigha</i> )	5,000
				Leased in (2 <i>bigha</i> )	4,000
Vinod Mandal	Share Cropper	2	35,000	Leased in (3 <i>bigha</i> ) House constructed	10,000 12,000
Kulo Mandal	Landless	3	50,000	Leased in (2 <i>bigha</i> )	8,000
				<u>Purchase</u> (I) Land (1 <i>bigha</i> )	10,000
				(ii) 1 Pair of Bullocks	10,000
				(iii) 1 Buffalo	8,000
Krityanand Paswan	Small Peasant	2.5	30,000	Loan paid for mortgaged land (1 <i>bigha</i> )	12,000
				Leased-in (1 <i>bigha</i> )	4,000
				Purchase Cow 1	7,000
Raju Mandal	Landless	3	35,000	Purchase land (1.5 <i>bigha</i> )	25,000

\* For banana plantation

The migration scenario in Tikapatti brings forth a few conclusions: first, though the prime reason for migration is economic, the cultural factors are also important; second, banana plantation generated 'hope' to those who returned with poor health and despaired mental state; third, the 'experience' of the early migrants warned the new visitors during eighties that migration cannot be a 'permanent' solution to their survival problem and therefore, should be adopted as a 'short-term' strategy for creating some stable asset and sustainable source of livelihood. This situation, therefore, appears to have created a 'rational' choice for short-term migration aiming at 'upward mobility' strategy (Chapter-8) in Tikapatti. I have experienced a similar<sup>32</sup> situation in another village in north Bihar. This highlights the need for a fresh enquiry into the dynamics of lower tier labour migration in Bihar.

The cultural factor needs some explanation. In Punjab, the farm owners work with the labourers; sit and eat with them; communicate with them with a sense of dignity. The social environment of the working place hardly makes a labour feel as looked down. In Bihar, the 'gap' between a *malik* (employer) and a *mazdoor* (labour) still exists. With growing awareness about the self-dignity, *mazdoor* is now no more ready to accept dehumanising behaviour from his employers. This cultural factor, in conjunction with the economic needs leads the labourer to 'escape' this situation of being 'looked down'. Even if 'escape', migration offers a route to create a path for a dignified life. The question of dignity is as central here as the question of survival is.

It is not unusual to find *maliks* complaining that migrant labourers are so arrogant that they just decline to work for a day or two even if called in emergency and they have to arrange local labour from other villages. The cultural transformation of a migrant labour helps redefine power relationship between the social classes.

The opposite side of the coin is that it takes price from migrant's wife and children in a different way. The consequential economic and cultural change induced through migration changes the complete life condition of a migrant's family. One of the important structural effects of migration is women's large-scale entry in to the labour market and public sphere and evolution of female-headed households in *de facto* sense of the term (Chapter 8).

Migrants earn money until their physical capability allows earning; consumes a part of saving and invests the other to create the base for a sustainable survival condition. What they lose miserably in this process, is their health, which later 'disqualifies' them to compete in labour market. The 'labour suction' region - rightly defined by Alagh (1987), which has already sucked in their physical potential, expels them out on the basis of physical 'incompetence'. The 'human' culture behaves 'humanly' until the human labour - a commodity - is capable to compete in the market. Home, then, becomes the final resort!

#### **4.2 Upper Tier Migration: Status elevation Strategy**

The flow of the upper tier outmigration aimed at status elevation is from rural to urban and knows no sectoral and spatial boundaries. It ranges from Calcutta (for business) to

Puna and Bombay (for film and documentary making) and from Devaria (Uttar Pradesh) to Jamalpur and Patna (for service sector jobs). The number of such upwardly-mobile families with upper tier migration to secondary and tertiary sectors is somewhere between 125 to 150.

This stands in contrast with the lower tier migration where it is the sole dominant route to survival. A careful study of the IRP table (Appendix 7A) leads to safely conclude that the economic status of the migrants in lower or upper tier both the segments is higher than their non-migrant counterparts within their respective economic classes.

The crucial issue, in both types of migration contexts, is how the families, in general and women, in particular, who stay back in the village, cope with this situation, where men become physically 'absent'. While absence of men, in general, imposes multifold responsibilities over women, this works as a 'catalyst' as well for helping them discover their own strength. The opposite side of the coin is, it is the essential contribution of women that enables men succeed in family's status elevation pursuits. The non-material consequences of male migration for women, in particular, are complex and multi-facet and affect poor and rich both in different ways (Chapter 8).

#### **4.3 Local Labour Processes, Markets, Relations**

The landowning households reported significant changes in labour relations in the village. In the seventies, labour relations were hierarchically based on unequal landholding, overlapping labourer and sharecropper status located within a relaxed nature of patron-client structure, and to a limited extent<sup>33</sup>, reinforced through the idiom of caste. The *harijan* labourers were supplicant, fragmented as clients between different patrons and therefore, not organised to seek higher wages or (if they are tenants) better crop-share conditions.

While some of these elements yet remain, it appears that the employment opportunities in high growth regions as well as the increase in labour demand arising from new technologies in agriculture and the wider availability of irrigation through pump sets and bamboo borings to support the production have transformed the supplicant stance of labourers to their employers. In a qualitative sense, employing landholders complain that even *harijan* labourers are not subservient to them; they have to be carefully persuaded

to work; treated tactfully, and that one cannot be too critical of their work because they might not turn up the following day. The change in labour relations is thus less the actual local market conditions and more the availability of the external employment option which gives the labourers more confidence and a greater sense of their own status in labour transactions.

The allocation of Bihar government land has added to this sense of status. But, more than this, the promotion of the backward castes in Bihar (from late 70s onwards) and adoption of the Mandal Commission report that recommends fair degree of reservation for them (during late 80s) has created political, ideological, and cultural space within which other backward castes including *harijans* are able to assert themselves without fear of social retribution. The ascendance of the *yadav* caste people to the apex of the state power in 1990 and its continuation till date has contributed to this process, and it is the upper caste people who are on the defensive. These propositions are difficult to prove here, but a marked change in atmosphere can well be felt.

Nevertheless, the wage rates are low and their value has not increased over last decades. The explanations for this can be divided between those internal to the village and those connected to outmigration. The internal explanations are two fold: the extent of organisation among the labourers and further objective conditions of the market. The organisation of the labourers was formed in late 1970s around wage issue by the CPI, which only partly succeeded for three reasons: the firm social cultural resistance, which viewed this organisation as a 'communist penetration'; the government launched a development plan called "Bihar Vikas Mandal" during 1978-79 that vitiated the organisational work, and the high paid employment opportunities in Punjab diverted pressure for higher wages and encouraged labourer's families operate individually in pursuit of these opportunities.

The structural reasons are also responsible for low wage. Tikapatti has a larger proportion of smaller farmers. The labourers are, therefore, aware that substantial section of the employers is less able to afford higher wage. The problem for the labourers is that low wage in Tikapatti are still preferable to distant villages where they might have to go for work. Thus, the labourers have settled for the reality of lower wage rates - a reality, which has been realised even by the radical movement in central Bihar.

The explanations for low wage rates can be further examined in the context of outmigration. With alternative employment opportunities available (in Punjab) to the stronger, younger, healthiest labour in the village, it would seem that the labour markets of Tikapatti and Punjab should be in competition with each other, and that wage rates in Tikapatti should rise as a result. This, however, is not the case. The answer lies in the nature of labour demand as well as other local conditions in Punjab and Tikapatti. Though the seasonal option remains for labour to extend its period of work in Punjab at the expense of working in Tikapatti. However, they need to return to Tikapatti, frequently, in order to deliver remittances to families; to maintain marital relations; to pay off debts; to ensure continued access to local employment for themselves and their womenfolk as well as to maintain the general conditions for the protection of their womenfolk. They return to the village but not primarily in desperate search for employment. However, when they are in the village they have to work or be idle and consume whatever savings they have brought with them. Thus, they have an interest in employment but the 'leisure preference' is higher than it used to be before. They cannot achieve higher wages because of farmers perceived inability to pay and because of the value of maintaining long-term patron-client ties. This constitutes the outmigration explanation of low wage rates in the village.

Labour scarcity has given way to a complex labour market, the dominant features of which are three dimensional competitiveness yet lower bargaining power between: the local and outsider labour, the employer and the labour, and male and female labour. The emergence of the labour contractors to facilitate external labour supply to meet the growing demand during peak seasons - is another development. The entry of brokers helps keep wage rates lower creating competitiveness between the local and the external labour.

Bargaining power has only moderately increased. The employer has to realise that their seasonal demand may be met out via external labour but for the stable nature of day-to-day demand they have to rely over the local labour both male and female. Labour also realises that going outside (locally) is a worse option. With the increased entry of female labour into the labour market, dependence over them becomes more reliable for the employer. 'Male have become prone to flying' - is their common expression. The wage rate for the female labour is also lower than the male. The other feasible way of 'solving' the labour problem is to rely more on the *bataidari*. Fresh expansion of *bataidari* is a

function of non-farm diversification and labour shortage both. While, hiring in labour from outside via brokers is the norm in banana sector, *bataidari* is dominant in the food sector.

Table - 7.7 Sectoral Increases in Wage Rates  
(1991-1993)

Genders And Juvenile	Food Sector (cash in Rs + kind)		Banana Sector (cash in Rs)	
	1991	1993	1991	1993
(1)	(2)			
Female	12+b	15+b	15	18
Male	15+b	20+b	22	25
Juvenile	6+b	7.5+b	7.5	9

b= breakfast

The wage rates and mode of payment both varies in food and cash sectors. In the food sector, kind and cash combined payment mode is common while in the banana sector cash payment is the norm. Gender disparity in wage is apparent, though real value of the cash and kind combined wage is higher than the cash wage (for women). Wage increase between 1991-93 is presented in Table 7.7 above.

The gender disparity in wage persists partly, due to gender bias associated with the cultural norms and partly, due to weaker bargaining power of the female labour. Bhawana Devi, a CPI activist reported that she tried to organise female labour on the wage issue. This could not succeed beyond a limit, because the employers threatened that they would replace them with male labour from outside, who on a little higher payment would work more efficiently. This is how a competitive situation between the male and female labour is created.

## 5. MARKET IN FACTORS OF PRODUCTION

Rent market in factors of production began to develop with mechanisation in agro-processing sector and private provisions in irrigation, though non-monetised transactions were common before. Private provisions are compulsion in the face of an insensitive public support system. The assets such as tractor, thresher, pump set, plough, etc. when put into the rent market offer services to those incapable to own them and constitute supplementary source of income to those who own. Rent market breaks the village boundaries as during peak season the increased demand for tractors is met through

hiring it from the neighbour village, Terasi, which is known as 'potato pocket'. Similar is the case with the pump sets.

### **5.1 Land: Exchange, Mortgage, Leasing**

Factors influencing market in land are many. Prices are different for different type of land with varying cropping potential. Banana plantation has inflated the prices for the elevated land. While low land put for food farming is cheaper, the elevated land used for banana plantation is expensive in the rent market. While oral tenancy is still the norm in the food-sector, legal leasing contract is a new development in the banana-sector. It is most frequently signed for at least four years<sup>34</sup>. The rental charge for one *bigha* (elevated land for banana plantation) in 1993 varied between Rs 4,000 to 6,000 per annum. It was Rs 1,000 to 3,000, subject to the quality of land, for food farming.

Sale and mortgaging out of land often takes place in serious needs, such as for meeting dowry demands, paying off bribes, coping with sickness, and meeting the loss in business and for investing in non-farming ventures<sup>35</sup>. Besides poor, it is rich and middle peasants as well who mortgage out land in need. Such transactions normally take place within the community. While the migrants among the poor often pay off loans and get back their mortgaged plots, the local people may have to enter into *sudbharana* leasing arrangements for the same.

### **5.2 Ploughing and Tractor Transaction**

Cropping intensity increases the demand for ploughing. Fewer households, apart from the richest farmers, are able to provide for all of their ploughing requirements. Under these conditions, more farming households are obliged to enter into arrangements with other families to supply ploughing services. The strong market for ploughing is, therefore, functioning to reallocate capacity from surplus to deficit draught livestock households. This means that the loss of a draught beast is no longer a total disaster for a household and also that the rental cost has to be set against the cost of maintaining a draught beast. Tractors have become key to relaxing the livestock draught constraint, especially as any family investing in a tractor is, in fact, investing in surplus capacity which has to be rented out so that the tractor can earn its keep. Tractor generates highest rental income (per hour). Apart from this, tractor serves as a load carrier and means for conveyance.



The rent market in tractor and other machines has induced rent market in cattle ploughing and other traditional factors of production. Earlier the transactions in traditional factors of production including ploughing were based on personal and community network. An interaction between traditional and modern has given way to a distinct nature and form of market to develop, which Wood (1994) terms as 'interlocked market' and simultaneously, to a distinct nature and form of social networking to evolve - both of which influence and decide the transaction behaviour of a farmer.

### **5.3 Complex Market in Irrigation**

The rent market in ground water is very complex, though it generates good income for the owner of diesel-fed pump sets. The distinct problem, however, is its maintenance cost. Poor access to the public quota<sup>36</sup> of diesel necessitates the owners to work hard on his local political and bureaucratic network position. The bamboo borings and pumpsets are often shared by more than one farmers. Altogether 60-62 electric and diesel operated pump sets in access of about 200 borings were available in Tikapatti in 1993 for shared use and transaction in rent market. This enables non-owners water their fields.

Families who do not own pump sets hold the majority of borings. At the same time, there are many households who do not own boring but nevertheless irrigate their land with them. Further complications are that some households own several borings (with or without owning a pump set) while some other share borings. Under these conditions, the ground water market becomes very complex. The ability to make these arrangements is very important to farmers, especially smaller ones with a greater intensity to use their water resources. A weakly networked customer (as in case of a smaller farmer) in the boring-pump set system has a precarious hold on the guarantee of necessary water supply, and therefore has to work hard on his network position, because the price mechanism alone is inadequate to secure this guarantee.

Irrigation is imperative; therefore, poor have to compromise with other needs, for hiring-in a pump set at unaffordable rates. The minimum cost for this with diesel-consumption cost is Rs 2-2.50 per hour and Rs 12-14 per day. After preparing land, anyhow managing for HYV seeds and some fertilizers, poor farmers finds themselves empty. Without irrigation all this would be wasted. 'We first have to quench the thirst of our farms, even if our

children are hungry' - this expression comes unanimously from those, who have to cope hard with the factor's market.

These markets may be regarded as evidence of incomplete capitalist relations in which actors are not free to pursue equilibrium prices, though they reveal some shift away from feudalistic monopolies, in which different actors cannot participate. They allow poor, at least, enter *albeit* on unequal terms.

## 6. THE BANANA BOOM!

*Dada Tambaku, Baap Patua, Beta Kela* (grandfather was growing tobacco, father grew Jute, and son is growing banana) - this popular saying in Tikapatti implies that cash crop is neither a new visitor to this village, nor a stable phenomenon. Market facilities and profit considerations appear to have remained crucial in making a decision about what to grow in cash sector over last three generations. This is substantiated by the version of an old age farmer who informs that it was the restrictions imposed by the government that led to replace tobacco by jute two decades ago. The market conditions, then, were favourable for jute. Other conditions like ecological changes, changing mind of the farmers with the introduction of the new technology during seventies etc. were also reported by the farmers to make a decision in favour of jute. This reflects the ever-enterprising mindset of the farmers as well, who know how to adapt and accommodate with the changing environment and how to utilise the new opportunities in their favour.

The enquiry about a switch over to banana during late eighties conveys some more revelations. It is apparent that the 'assured' profit is the prime instigator, the conditions for which are created through assured credit, transport and marketing facilities for the produce<sup>37</sup>. What is not apparent is the growing sense of getting more returns in farming and a 'hidden' spirit of competition with those who earn much more through diversion in non-farming sectors.

The availability of good quality elevated land satisfies the basic condition to promote banana plantation. This naturally gifted land resource has always made cash farming prospects better in Tikapatti. Thus, good quality elevated land, better communication, competitive market, assured profit and a group of enterprising farmers - in essence, the material and attitudinal, both set of favourable conditions are present here to promote

banana plantation. Why banana remained the main cash crop of the nineties seeks no further explanation.

How common people perceive this 'banana bonanza'? The instant reaction is, it has created employment opportunities for some of the unemployed youths, subsequently helping curb lumpenisation, to some extent. While busy in an informal talk session with a group of rich peasants, the loud voice of Bullet motorcycle is frequently disturbing our continuity. I ask wittingly as how many 'eligible' bachelors are married this year? The number of motorcycles appears to have substantially increased over couple of years. 'You are right', I am responded instantly, 'at least 30 more (now it is about 50) motorcycles are bought over this period, of which only a few are dowry offers. Credit goes to Banana boom! Some rich joint families have two bikes. Banana plantation has necessitated fast mobility. Lease-contracts are prepared and signed at Dhamdaha sub-divisional office about 25-30 Km away from village. Other provisions also require mobility more than ever before.

Banana plantation significantly increased since 1991. In 1989 only 55 *bighas* were planted, it rose to 300 *bighas* in 1993. In Chandpur *tola* alone, 47 farmers planted banana. Lanka *tola* is another cluster of enterprising banana growers. The formal legal contract and lease system in land is introduced with banana. The service market has expanded and becoming preferential (over the food-sector). The increased pace of input management, contract signing etc. has increased mobility for which two dozen motorcycles are bought over last two years.

About 1000 plants are sown in 1 *bigha* plot and 1400 in 1 acre. I have compiled the whole banana production cycle (BPC, Appendix 7B) on the basis of information obtained from the growers. The preliminary conclusions derived from the production cycle are summed up below:

- Banana farming is mainly a masculine occupation with the sole exception of female employment in load carry after the fruit is ready.
- Investment in inputs other than labour is very high.
- Labour-intensity and employment opportunity are greater than the food farming.

- This single crop engages a plot for the four successive years; therefore, the 'real' profit (in relation to food crops) needs to be evaluated in this context.

## 6.1 Class Composition and Market Network

Who are the dominant banana growers? It is the rich and middle farmer households from the Pure Group, which either 'chose' a part of their total holding or 'lease-in' a plot (in case a suitable plot is not available) for banana farming. A few enterprising households from small peasant class may also be found managing small plots for planting banana. For instance, Raj Kr Jha - a *bataidar* of Anil Mandal, a rich peasant, has obtained a contract of 3 *bigha* plot for plantation through his employer's support. The cases of some migrant labourers investing their savings into banana farming are cited above (3.5.1). The big landowners (with above 100 acres and enormous resources) are not interested.

The 'composite group' is less interested in this venture. The class composition of banana growers reveals that the competitive element of market in Banana sector does not *a priori* exclude other classes or let the privileged classes arbitrarily monopolise the venture. Nevertheless, it is neither scale-neutral nor resource-neutral. This is evident from the income variation between the different classes of planters (see IRP). This may be safely argued in spite of a tendency of the people to provide wrong information about their income and resource position. The quantity of production is difficult to obtain, but the highest net annual income, as reported by the farmers, is Rs 40 to 50 thousand per *bigha*. This includes the cost, which is about Rs 13,000 per *bigha* (Table-7.8 below). One thousand plants are grown in one *bigha*.

Table – 7.8 Banana Plantation and Transport Cost (Plant-wise)

No..	Items	Cost (in Rs)
1.	Labour	3
2.	Fertilizer	5
3.	Insecticides	2
4.	Irrigation	2
5.	Transport	1
Total		Rs 13

Using this amount of income as the standard measure the income variation is revealing. The reasons may be more than one. Income also varies by how many of the total plants

reach to the market. For instance, Dinesh Chaudhary informed that out of 1700 plants sown in 1991, 300 were consumed and damaged. Only 1400 reached to the market.

The produce is well connected with the competitive local as well as national market and beyond. The banana growers enter into the contracts with the whole-sellers located at Calcutta and Kharagpur in West Bengal (east); Andhra Pradesh (south); Patna, Nawadah and Betiah in Bihar; Gorakhpur and adjacent areas in Uttar Pradesh (west) and Kathmandu (north) in Nepal. At occasions, the growers are facilitated with loan and advances. If predictable, crop is sold out in advance, on the basis of proximate calculations. Transportation is well arranged by the agents working between the grower and the whole sellers. I have been an eye witness<sup>37</sup> to the assured transportation.

## 6.2 Who Pays Who Reaps?

Banana farming is the most profitable venture for the Pure Group households. The profit motive has encouraged an arbitrary tendency of diverting away of the best quality elevated land from the food sector, without taking into consideration its bad consequences over the later. This undermines a rationality logistics.

How (ir)rational are the clever growers of Tikapatti, could be understood from a single instance. In Naugachhia<sup>38</sup> banana was planted in 1989 in low land, which suffered serious damage due to water-logging. Taking lesson from this event, farmers in Tikapatti, to avoid any risk, indiscriminately began 'reserving' elevated land for banana, erstwhile used for maize and lentils. The temporary profit potential in banana has severely affected both the traditional crops grown for domestic consumption as well as for the market. Maize has suffered most in this process; it is relegated to its 'inferior' *jethua* quality production, which is grown in low land, with inferior seeds and local manures. Other traditional cash crops such as *arhar*, *tori* (mustard) have also suffered.

The 'preferential' attitude (over food farming) is obvious in investment behaviour as well. And, this is despite the fact that they know well the 'temporary' nature of the banana boom. Therefore, when asked what next after banana? They have no firm answer.

Thus, the best quality elevated land is obtained for banana at the expense of food sector crops and relatively inferior quality land is left for the main food crops such as wheat,

paddy, lentils, maize etc. The green vegetables, local spinaches and spices, such as chilli and turmeric have to be accommodated in changing situation, as many of these require elevated land for good harvest. Only a little fraction of land is now available for *kharot*, the main livestock. This is discouraging cattle-raising, which constitute the second best source of income for the poor. It is adversely affecting fire wood<sup>39</sup> for cooking as well.

The excessive use of the chemical fertilizers and particular cropping condition of banana (Appendix 7B) severely affects the health and fertility of the soil. This was informed by some of the old age farmers. The health hazard is for the labourer as well. Thiamite, a poisonous weedicide that is liberally used over banana plants has very harmful effects over human body and eyes, in particular. The villagers informed that men engaged in rigorous job of its periodic spray suffer from eye and lungs problems.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Growing aspirations for high returns in farming is satisfied in banana sector, but where does this 'aspiration' come from? This comes from the growing money, power, strength accumulated by the Composite Group via non-farming sector openings. The Pure Group wants money for 'buying' educated non-farming sector employed youths for their daughters; for bribing the non-farming sector employers to obtain a job for their educated unemployed sons; for spending on status goods; for investing in quality of education for their growing children and for many other purposes. The emerging life style perceives money as the key indicator of status, strength and power. This perception of money has never been so pronounced before. This approach to life provides some powerful insights into the gender relations, which has undergone significant change in the course of this overall transformation in Tikapatti.

The transformation of an inwardly closed society into a relatively market oriented outwardly opening society has created material conditions for women to come out of their inside spheres and look forward to the available market options, in order to cope with the changing socio-economic conditions. This, in turn has significantly transformed the traditional nature of simple gender-relations into a complex one. I explore the multifarious forms and nature of this transformation from a women's perspective in chapters eight, nine, and ten below.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **WOMEN LIBERATION: THE PRODUCTIVE REGIME**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores how market opportunities have affected women's productive regime across different economic classes enabling them emerge as stronger (than before) actors in Tikapatti. The markets are approached here as the optional route to women liberation. And, 'recognition', 'visibility' and 'assertiveness' elements of women's stake in domestic as well as public spheres are applied as 'key criteria' and 'qualitative indicators' to evaluate their liberating position.

The model of agricultural development instilled through new technology basically aimed at 'production for the market'. This was a basic shift from the traditional approach to 'production for the sustenance'. Increase in production thus remained central to the mainstream development that views human being centrally as a 'producer'. A market option for women liberation, therefore, implies that women have to be viewed centrally as a 'producer'. I explore the spaces and scope they eventually discover and utilise for their self-recognition, visibility and assertion, at all levels and in all spheres of production processes.

In preceding chapter, I have dealt at length with nature and forms of development that led to distinct structural changes in Tikapatti. The gender-neutral implications (of these changes) for the economy, society, politics and culture of the village provide a dynamic setting for further explorations into their gendered implications, which I attempt in this chapter (and in next two chapters as well).

The gender implications of structural change and market behaviour are complex. Market forces are having a decisive impact over women's economic activities. Markets, on many occasions, challenge traditional gender behaviour. Gender, on many occasions, constrains market options for women. I attempt to comprehend and analyse this complex

interaction between the gender behaviour and the market forces and evolving forms and nature of 'liberation' for women, in this interactive process.

## 2. FORECLOSURES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES: AN OVERVIEW

The village is divided along caste, class and gender dimensions, all variously engaged in problem-solving in the context of a continually shifting landscape of both expanding opportunities and foreclosures during last decades. For women, divided along caste and class dimensions in Tikapatti, the way to liberation before 1947 was active participation in the national liberation movement led by the Indian National Congress. The influence of Gandhian ideology helped them liberate to a certain extent, from illiteracy, certain kind of cultural constraints and inegalitarian gender behaviour within traditional socio-cultural framework. The impact of the Gandhian ethos, though faded over time, has remained strong enough to resist radical political forces to influence even the poorest section of the village society with sole exception of some activists of the Communist Party of India staying in village, the brightest among whom is a woman! It was against this social-political setting that market-oriented new technology visited Tikapatti.

Before new technology visited Tikapatti, women had liberal access to local technology based cottage industries, which offered employment and income to them. The *Dhenki* (local technology for manual processing of grains) and *Tel Ghani* (local technology for extracting oil) industries offered substantial work opportunities for women. *Atta Chakki* (local technique for making grain's flour) offered another home-based income-generating activity. These cottage industries were closed after machines replaced them.

The traditional *Charkha* (the spinning wheel) with two wheels was another home-based industry that offered women voluntary employment and income. This cheaper technology is replaced by an expensive *Amber Charkha* (a mechanised spinning wheel), which is harder to afford. The manual *Charkha*, erstwhile available to women in many houses, which they freely used any time in combination with domestic and post-harvest works, is now out of sight. The *Charkha* industry is now transferred to public sphere and offers only part time employment and meagre income to about 50 women.

Bee keeping was another traditional income-generating activity until the eighties. The new technology was introduced to this arena through imparting modern training for skill development to some women and men. The next step of this skill-development



programme, viz. assisting the trained people with resources to further develop and expand this area of activity was never taken up.

These traditional employment and income-generating activities were either exclusive to women or at least female dominated. These were home-based production units of voluntary nature and content. They contained enormous scope for intra-family and community level interaction between women as well as between the genders, as many of these were shared by women and men both.

Shivarani Devi, the oldest female social activist in Tikapatti says that traditional activities provided women better options and working environment than what is now available to them. The reason lied in properly networked, interdependent yet self-sufficient nature of these activities, which produced a more cohesive, sensitive and humane working environment.

The implications of mechanisation could be widely observed in agro-processing sector, which has undergone most extensive change. The threshers and rice, wheat and oil processing mills have almost replaced *Dhenki*, *Chakki*, *Tel Ghani* and many other local agro-processing techniques. Shivarani Devi expresses her discontent over this change and strongly argues that these modern techniques have completely alienated women and changed, not for the better, the whole working environment for both the genders.

She further adds that modernisation in agriculture has left women food producers worse off than before. With the best land under banana plantation, they have to work harder (than before) on poor quality smaller plots in food sector. One of the key implications of the modernisation process is large-scale entry of women in labour market. With this 'imposed' mobility – mainly a function of male migration - even small and middle peasant women have to enter the factor markets. Shivarani Devi is a school teacher on the verge of retirement (from her job) and still very active among women.

The substantial proportion of post-harvest processing work, hitherto a female-domain flourishing inside home, is now mechanised and performed in market. Nevertheless, for small and poor peasant households, mechanised food processing is too expensive to afford. This means increased burdens on such women. Use of mechanised equipment is a 'status symbol' often reserved for men, while women assist them.

## 2.1 Women In Agrarian Set-up

Given an agrarian structure with a downward shift in landholding per household, the subsequent intensification of land use increases the intensity of farming activity. This, consequently, increases the demand for post-harvest services such as transportation and milling. For small farm families, women become increasingly involved in fieldwork as well as post-harvest labour. For labouring families, women become certainly more engaged than before in fieldwork and post harvest operations for their employers. This prominence of women is reinforced not only by increased demand for labour through cropping intensity but also because of competing demands for male labour from outside the region (Chapter- 7).

Though a steep rise in women's entry into the labour market as compensating for men is perceptible, their bargaining power remains weaker. The opposite face of the coin is a more humane nature of payment mode, i.e. a cash and kind combine, which has higher value in real terms, than cash payment mode. The growing consciousness among female labour against wage discrimination is encouraging, after the CPI succeeded in creating a leadership from below – Bhawana Devi, though this woman comes from a middle peasant family.

Another dimension of agrarian structure is that a land reconsolidation process is taking place simultaneously with land fragmentation. This dual process of movement of land from above (rich) to below (poor) and vice versa has specific class-relative gender implications.

The changes in agrarian structure have significantly challenged traditional inside-outside polarised gender division of labour. While under some conditions the cleavage between the inside and outside is mitigated, under some other this is widened. Peasants, artisans, crafts-people and petty traders - each of these categories of domestic production units show variation in gender division of labour.

With modernisation consequent upon urbanisation, the non-farming sector (and service sector, in particular) has acquired a superior status. Modernisation has a depressing effect on agriculture. While farming overall is pushed down to a secondary status by

those who have diversified in non-farming activities, the food sector is also deserted by those who specialise in cash-cropping, banana in this case.

## 2.2 Demographic Features

I need to remind the reader here that I have presented (in Chapter- 7) a set of peasantry classes - shifting away from a conventional Marxist scheme of peasantry classification. The class-relative analysis all through this chapter is based on the same scheme. I also remind that the total households are divided along vertical lines into two broad economic groups: the Pure Group and the Composite Group. Each of these groups is further divided into the peasantry classes. While the Pure Group contains five classes, the Composite has only four (Appendix -7A). These vertical and horizontal divisions form the basis for the computation of data presented below in tabular form. The Tables are presented in two models; in one the Classes and Groups are arranged along the vertical axis and the contents along the horizontal axis; and in the other, Classes and Groups are arranged along the horizontal axis and the contents along the vertical. The Cases described all through this chapter carry codes put with each household profile in Pure and Composite both the groups.

The Census figures (Appendix - 6) reveal that the sex ratio in Tikapatti is 899, below the corresponding figure (903) for Purnea. The primary data (Table - 8.1 below) establishes the sex ratio at 906. The lower sex ratio, however, does not comply with progressive social and cultural environment and higher education level. The unique demographic feature is an exceptionally high proportion of adult populace to children. The Adult: Child ratio is 1:0.56. This may be explained in terms of growing awareness for having small families among the better offs, in general, though the smallest family size is found among the landless class at an average of 5.2 members. This may be explained in terms of a higher infant-mortality rate among landless families. While the average family size in Pure Group is 6.6, in Composite Group it is 7.6, (the rounded average of both is 7). This explains that non-farm diversification takes place usually in big families. It is obvious from the Table-8.1 (above) that rich peasants have the largest family size (9.8 and 13) in both groups. This also means that rich peasant class may have higher percentage of joint families.

Table 8.1: Demographic Features Across Groups and Classes

Classes In each Group	Number of		Family- size	Number of		Sex ratio	Number of		A:C Ratio
	Family	Persons		Female	Male		Adult (A)	Child (C)	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
<b>PURE GROUP</b>									
Landlord	3	25	8.3	11	14	786	19	6	1: .32
Rich Peasant	6	59	9.8	28	31	903	44	15	1: .34
Middle Peasant	31	222	7.1	104	118	881	134	88	1: .66
Small Peasant	25	156	6.2	73	83	879	104	52	1: .50
Landless	20	104	5.2	53	51	1039	66	38	1: .58
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>6.6*</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>906*</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1: .54*</b>
<b>COMPOSITE GROUP</b>									
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Rich Peasant	4	52	13	25	27	925	39	13	1: 33
Middle Peasant	11	85	7.7	41	44	932	52	33	1: 64
Small Peasant	16	103	6.4	49	54	907	63	40	1: 64
Landless	20	149	7.4	70	79	886	92	57	1: 62
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>7.6*</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>906*</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1: .58*</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>7.0*</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>906*</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>1: .56*</b>

\* Averages taken from total

The **caste composition** of the populace reveals (Table-8.2 below) that *Kaivarth* caste people occupy the summit with 54.5 percent, followed by *Harijan* and *Bania* with 16.2 and 15.4 percent respectively. While *Yadav* occupy only 8 percent, the *Barbers* and other artisan castes 3.7 percent each. In Table-8.2 (below) the Classes and Groups are arranged along the horizontal axis and name of castes along the vertical.

Table -8.2: Caste Composition in Tikapatti

Name of the Castes	Number Of Families From Different Castes Across Classes / Groups									Total	% to Total	
	Landlord		Rich Peasant		Middle Peasant		Small Peasant		Landless			
	PG		PG	CG	PG	CG	PG	CG	PG			CG
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
Kaivarth	2	4	3	22	9	12	10	6	6	74	54.4	
Bania				6		2	4	3	6	21	15.4	
Yadav	1	2		1	1	2	1			8	5.9	
Artisans								2	3	5	3.7	
Barber					1			2	2	5	3.7	
Harijan				2		9	1	7	3	22	16.2	
Brahmin			1							1	0.7	
Totals	3	6	4	31	11	25	16	20	20	136	100	

PG – Pure Group; CG – Composite Group

### **3. THE BANANA SECTOR: A CASE FOR SUPER-EXPLOITATION**

The banana sector has emerged as a masculine arena of production. The growers are male, producers are male, production processes are formalised and controlled by men and the kind of labour involved is arduous. Some conclusions derived from Chapter-7, summed up below, are relevant to argue that banana farming is not only a masculine occupation but also flourishes at the expense of food sector.

- The one year (and more) long production cycle reveals (Appendix 7B) that banana offers negligible scope to women as direct producers.
- The sole female-employment opportunity exists in load carrying after the produce is ready.
- Investment in inputs other than labour is very high and the plot once planted is engaged for the four consecutive years (Appendix 7B).
- A preferential attitude (over food-farming) in investment behaviour of banana growers, driven by pure profit motive is revealing in spite of a recognition that banana boom may not be a stable phenomenon.
- The profitability element has encouraged an arbitrary tendency of diverting away the best quality elevated land from food sector without caring for its negative consequences for the same, which offers stable employment.
- The most 'qualified' land, therefore, is obtained and reserved for banana at the expense of the main food crops including traditional cash crops such as lentils, mustard, maize grown on elevated superior quality of land. The poorer quality land is left for food crops and green vegetables, local spinaches, spices etc.. These have to be accommodated in even constricting areas though many of these require elevated land for good harvest.

- Land under *Kharot* (fodder) cultivation is shrinking. This is affecting cattle raising – a supplementary income-generating occupation constituting the second largest source of income for poor.
- With increasing acres under banana, the area under food farming is decreasing. One of the major implications of this is decreasing volume of firewood for cooking and other such domestic purposes. This is severely affecting poor women.

Why labour market for women is so restricted in banana sector? The banana growers argue that it requires intensive and arduous labour not suited to female physiology. Opportunities for female labour absorption occur only for a few weeks for carrying loads and cleaning the fields after cutting is over. This is unskilled job. The other explanation comes from women themselves. They informed that some work opportunity still be made available if they are ready to take 'risk' of sexual exploitation. The poor women, thus 'prefer' to work in food sector rather than in banana fields due to sexual security reasons as well. A total exclusion of female labour from commercial farming sector has never happened before. In fact, jute and tobacco offered greater opportunities for female labour absorption. The positive aspect of their exclusion is that they, unlike men, are spared of its harmful health consequences (Chapter-7).

The class composition of banana growers excludes top and bottom echelons of the class hierarchy. Women from these rich and middle peasant households have to 'indirectly' support and facilitate banana farming at the expense of poor women who have to take responsibilities of domestic and post-harvest work. This is how rich women are relieved for a greater involvement in food production, deserted by men for banana farming.

Sharma's study (1980) in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh reveals that capitalist farming involves direct contact with control over dealers, firms, government, market etc. and this 'outside' household business is confined to men. This applies to banana farming in north Bihar. However, contrary to Sharma's finding, women in these households are not discouraged rather encouraged to opt for greater involvement in food production process.

The above findings could be substantiated through the case below:

**Case (PG/B4):** In this rich peasant joint family, the 55-year-old house lady Shyama Devi, wife of Kulanand Mandal, the *Mukhiya* (headman) of the village, was found extremely busy during peak season in farm-supervision work out in field and post-harvest work at home. What Kulanand Mandal himself does? He is involved in overall production management, dealings with the administration, market and transportation related to banana farming. He also extends support to his wife in outside work involved in food production and marketing. Shyama Devi is relieved from all domestic work. The younger women of the family do domestic work and they are supported by maids.

While in resource-rich families women are encouraged, in middle peasant families with moderate resources, aspiration for economic advancement through banana venture imposes heavy workload on women. They have to bear the major responsibility of food farming, which they erstwhile had to share. This is substantiated through a case below.

**Case (PG/C8):** Kalawati, wife of Jyotish Gupta, has to manage 7 *bigha* of land under self-cultivated food crops and supervise out in field as well as post-harvest work in *aangan* (courtyard). Jyotish is busy in banana farm of 1 *bigha*. He manages market, transportation, and input arrangement, i.e. all formal affairs in food farming. Kalawati has to do domestic work and look after her old mother-in-law, in addition. She is supported by a part time maid.

It is amazing to locate a lone case of a female banana grower in this masculine arena.

**Case (PG/C2):** Bhawana Devi, (referred in 2.1 as well) an enterprising farmer has planted banana in an 18-katha-plot breaking the male dominance. She has also planted bamboo, *shesham* (a kind of tree of commercial value) and food crops - paddy, maize and lentils in a 4-bigha plot. Besides being a very efficient farmer, she is capable of maintaining good networks as well that enables her grow and transact 2-3 crops a year.

It is at the expense of the female labour and skills in different forms such as wage labour/ family labour/ supervision - that the profit generating banana sector has flourished. With women bearing the substantial burden of food sector work, banana farming is possible to sustain, because it consumes substantial time, energy, and attention of men. Therefore, food sector is increasingly becoming a feminine sector, in same way as the cash sector has become a masculine sector. The cash sector is flourishing at the expense of subsistence sector. The processes are most facilitated, though indirectly, by those poor women who are nowhere in reaping the benefits from the profit accruing through banana. This situation apparently constitutes a case for super-exploitation (Mies, 1986) of poor women in cash sector.

Food and commercial farming appear to operate as two distinct production systems as well, with the later subordinating the former. These two systems erstwhile co-existed with the food sector, as dominant. Food sector still dominates village production system in terms of acres and populace employed as well as in terms of provider of sustenance to local people. Therefore, I argue that it is sustenance that prevails over the market; it is the informal economy that prevails over the formal; it is the feminine that prevails over the masculine. How? I substantiate this through empirical evidence below.

#### 4. EXPLORING THE FEMININE FARMING

In continuation with the above findings I have strong empirical grounds to argue that sharp cleavages have emerged between food and cash sectors of farming in Tikapatti, over last decades. The former is dominated by women and the latter, by men. Women's role is so well entrenched and all pervasive in the former that it provides sound basis to term this sector as the 'feminine farming sector'. Similarly, domineering role of men in banana sector provides sound basis to describe it as the 'masculine farming sector'. This could be substantiated through food production system, proportion of manual labour and mechanical devices employed in production processes, and wage structures. Besides, different tables based on the IRP Table (Appendix 7A) presented below also offer strong evidence to support this argument. These are in addition to case profiles.

##### 4.1 The Food Production Cycle

The paddy, wheat, and maize are three major food crops grown in Tikapatti. I have compiled the whole production cycle of these crops in 'food production cycle' (FPC, Appendix 8A) on the basis of information obtained from villagers - women and men both. I have constructed two small Matrixes (8.1 and 8.2 below) basing on the FPC, which reveal that the whole production cycle of these three main crops involve altogether six types of fieldwork during six stages of production. Of these, ploughing, *chauki* making (seed-bedding) and *patwan* (irrigation) involve male labour. The other three sowing or planting, *kyari* (slim canals) making and *nikauni* (cleaning of unwanted growth like, grass etc.) involve female labour. The *patwan* and *nikauni* are repeated until the crop is matured. While paddy requires only two rounds of *patwan* and *nikauni*, wheat and maize require four and six rounds respectively. Paddy, wheat and maize, thus involve altogether 8, 12, and 16 stages of work during whole production cycle.



Matrix 8.1: Gender Distinction in Food Farming

FOOD PRODUCTION CYCLE	
Male work	Female work
Stages of Work	
Ploughing <i>Chauki Making</i> <i>Patwan</i>	Sowing <i>Kyari Making</i> <i>Nikauni</i>
Mode of Work	
Optionally Mechanical / Manual	Essentially Manual
Nature of Work	
Strenuous Short duration	Steady Long duration
Mode of Wage Payment	
Cash or Cash (& cooked breakfast)	Cash & kind (Uncooked cereal)

Matrix 8.2: Land-wise and Crop-wise Variation in Irrigation

Crops	Frequency of Irrigation (Land Type-Wise)		Crop Maturing Period
	Elevated	Low	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Paddy	2 (rounds)	Not required	4 months
Wheat	4 (rounds)	2 (rounds)	6 months
Maize	6 (rounds)	4(rounds)	6 months

Table 8.3: Gender-wise Wage Differential, Total And Average Wage, Labour days

Crops	Gender Differential in Wage						Female Wage as % to Male wage	Grand Total of Wage (In Rs)	% To Grand Total	
	Female			Male					Female	Male
	Total Wage (in Cash & Kind)	Total & Average Wage (in Rs*)	Total (T) Labour Days (with %)	Total Wage (in Cash & Kind)	Total & Average Wage (in Rs)	Total (T) Labour Days (with %)				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Paddy	Rs. 696 +12kgC +1.5kgL +42b	943 (15.2)	62 (73.8) T: 84	Rs 530 +22b	585 (26.6)	22 (26.2) T: 84	57.14	1528	61.71	38.29
Wheat	Rs. 630 +109kgC +1.25kgL	1737 (14.5)	120 (82.2) T: 146	Rs 610 +26b	675 (25.9)	26 (17.8) T: 146	56	2412	72	28
Maize	Rs. 830 +145kgC +1.25kgL	2297 (14.4)	160 (84.2) T: 190	Rs 690 +30b	765 (25.5)	30 (15.8) T:190	56.47	3062	75	25

Abbreviations: C-Cereals; L-Lentils; b - Breakfast

\* The volumes of the Cereal, Lentils, and Breakfast are computed in terms of Rs @ of 10 per kg (cereal), 15 per kg (lentils) and 2.5 (per breakfast) at the 1993 prices in the rural grains market.

Some important conclusions derived from analysis of table 8.3 above are:

The total labour days for female, in paddy production cycle, is 62, while for male it is 22, if the ploughing involves manual operation (cattle ploughing) and just 11 days, i.e. reduced to half, if it involves mechanical operation (tractor use). In the case of wheat, the total female labour days are 120 and for maize, it is 160. The male labour days in wheat is 26 and in maize 30, if involves cattle ploughing and it is just 15 and 19, if tractor is used for ploughing. While all the three male tasks are optionally mechanised, the female works are essentially manual.

Other crops, for instance, *tori* (mustard) involve a higher incidence of female labour, as it requires increased rounds of *nikauni*. Vegetable growing is yet another important arena of feminine farming in poor and middle peasant households.

## 4.2 The Wage Structure

The FPC (Appendix - 8A) also provides some insights into gender and work differentiated structure of wages. While the wage rate for female work is more differentiated by nature of work and crops, for male, it is more uniform. For instance, for sowing, it is higher and for *kyari* making and *nikauni*, it is lower. Further, wage-rate is same for sowing of all three crops, while it is crop-differentiated for the rest two tasks. For male work, the wage rate is higher for ploughing and lower for *patwan* for all crops. Although wages have increased for men and women both, gender inequality persists. It was Rs 20-25 in 1993 for male and Rs 12-15-18 for female, varying according to work.

The mode of wage payment is also gender-differentiated. Cash is the dominant payment mode for male, while for female it is cash and kind combined. Even more interesting is the provision of cooked breakfast for men if they are paid in cash and kind both, while women are paid with uncooked cereals. These trends appear to reflect the extension, of gender-differentiation in food behaviour within a family, to the public sphere. Another explanation for uncooked cereal paid as wage to women could be a reinforcement of their 'provider's' role within the poor families, where it is women who bring food for the whole family. The third explanation could be formal and informal systems of the local

economies to prevail in behaving with the genders. The cash payment mode is a more formalised arrangement mainly confined to men.

The gender discrimination in wages prevails normally in cash payment mode. The situation with the cash and kind payment mode is different. The money value of kind payment appears to compensate, to some extent, the wage-gap between the genders. For instance, the market price of 1 kg of cereal and 125 gm of lentils is equal to Rs 10-12 and this wage in addition to Rs 8 as cash makes Rs 20, i.e. only little less to the male wage. The gap, however, increases with breakfast provision for men and with only Rs 5 as cash provision in *nikauni* work in the case of wheat and maize. In the case of paddy a clear distinction (see FPC, Appendix -7A) may be observed in *nikauni* work, for which while women are paid Rs 12 and breakfast, men get Rs 20 and breakfast. The gender differentiation in wage is also revealing with a gap to the tune of above 40 percent between the genders, i.e. women, on an average, get less than 60 percent of what men get, though this gap again varies by work.

The real value of kind payment, however, cannot be ignored, because if a female labour has to buy the same quantity of cereal in the market, she has not only to pay more but also has to be harassed everyday for going to market. The real value of kind payment is also high in cutting and storage work as it involves family labour. The crop-share system of wage payment allows liberal scope for the labourers to get. While making bundles of the harvest they usually make their share of bundles heavier and bigger than their employer's share. Even the additional part of the harvest is shared by children of the labourers, who collect the *bichhua* (leftovers), deliberately 'left' by their parents in course of making bundles. This *bichhua* may constitute the amount of food enough for a week.

The traditional wage mode, (viz. kind payments) appears to be differentiated more obviously on account of the nature of work than gender *per se*. In fact, work itself is gender-divided yet what determines this gender division of work? Probably, the nature of work itself. The nature of tasks traditionally assigned to men is more strenuous while; the nature of tasks assigned to women is more steady and enduring.

The prevalence of cattle over machine suggests that though machines are extensively used for production, post-production work, and for the rent market - the traditional relationship between farming and cattle raising remains widespread. While women are

hardly familiar with machine and barely involved in their upkeep, operation and exchange they are much familiar with cattle, which they nurture, care and raise.

While contrasting manual vis-à-vis mechanical does not mean excluding one at the expense of the other, I am arguing for a suitable approach to mechanisation. The significance of mechanisation is evident from its contribution to productivity, timeliness and efficiency. But its cost excludes those weaker in resources. Mechanisation is in no way class or resource-neutral. Women producers, already weaker in resources, confined to food sector, and unskilled in handling machines have very little opportunity to take direct advantage of mechanisation. The nature of such technology is itself patriarchal.

### 4.3 Farming Types and Incidence of Labour

How feminine prevails over masculine in productive regime can be substantiated through incidence of farming type (Table 8.4) and form of labour involved in production (Table 8.5). It is the incidence of subsistence (food) farming that prevails among all peasant classes in general. The exception to this is rich peasant class, 50 percent of which grows banana, followed by the middle peasant (26%). The incidence of subsistence farming is highest (88%) in small peasant class, followed by the middle peasant (74%) and landlord (66%) classes (Table-8.4 below).

Table 8.4: Incidence of Subsistence and Banana Farming

Classes	Farming Types	Number of Households		Total HHs	% to Total
		Pure Group	Composite Group		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Landlord	Total	3		3	
	<b>Subsistence</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>66</b>
	Banana	1		1	33
Rich Peasant	Total	6	4	10	
	<b>Subsistence</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>
	Banana	4	1	5	50
Middle Peasant	Total	31	11	42	
	<b>Subsistence</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>74</b>
	Banana	11		11	26
Small Peasant	Total	25	16	41	
	<b>Subsistence</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>88</b>
	Banana	2	3	5	12
Total		65	31	93	

It has to be made explicit that banana growers use only a fraction of their total holding for this venture. The number (and %) of banana growers thus, indicates that apart from subsistence farming they grow banana as an additional crop. While this 'additional' farming activity is totally a male domain, the 'essential' larger subsistence farming is substantially shared by women. Table 8.4 also reveals that in CG subsistence farming predominates as women have to get involved in farm management in absence of men.

Shifting away from a static concept of 'labour', I introduce here the dynamic concepts of 'effective' and 'dominant' labour. Likewise the concept of 'effective' holding (Chapter-7) the 'effective labour' is defined here as a combination of different forms of labour involved in production. This is a more realistic approach to labour, because involvement of more than one form of labour in farming is a common feature in Bihar. The concept of 'dominant labour' is defined here as the dominant form of labour involved in production, though other forms of labour are also available to supplement. It is the dominant form of labour, which is normally taken into account in peasantry classification analyses.

Table 8.5: Form and Kind of Labour Involved in Production

Classes	Kind of Labour (Dominant & Effective)	No. Of Households with Forms of Labour Involved						Total
		Pure Group			Composite Group			
		SC	FL	HL	SC	FL	HL	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Landlord	Dominant	1		2				3
	Effective	1		3				4
Rich	Dominant	3		3	1			7
	Effective	3		6	3	2	2	16
Middle	Dominant	2	3	9	3	1		18
	Effective	12	10	26	6	8	4	66
Small	Dominant		25		3	3	1	32
	Effective		25	2	5	8	4	44
Total	Dominant	6	28	14	7	4	1	69
	Effective	16	35	37	14	18	10	139
Grand Total		22	63	51	21	40	11	

Abbreviations: SC- Share Cropping; FL - Family Labour; HL - Hired Labour

Table 8.5 (above is based on column (7) of the IRP table (Appendix 7A). The forms of labour involved in production, when seen in conjunction with kind of labour (viz. 'dominant' and 'effective'), it reveals that family Labour (63+40=103) emerges as the dominant form of labour involved in production, followed by hired labour (51+11=62) and share cropping (22+21=43) in both groups. The greater involvement of female-labour could be seen in the context of effecting holding as well. It is middle and small peasants who emerge as significant 'gainer' in terms of 'effective holding' (IRP/Col 7, Appendix 7A)

heavily relying on family labour. These evidence further corroborate to the argument that feminine prevails over masculine.

## 5. WOMEN'S WORK REGIME

The application of Bardhan's (1989) classification of women's work regime is relevant here to support my argument. This classification contains four categories of work:

- Income-earning (directly remunerative work);
- Domestic (generational reproductive work);
- Subsistence (expenditure-saving or use-value production);
- Extended economic activities.

Female labour allocation in these categories, according to the author, varies across the classes depending on three factors: the land or asset or education; the household economic context comprising the infrastructure, the eco-environment, the level and nature of technology; and the local availability of remunerative work. These four categories do not fully explain the women's work regime in Tikapatti. For instance, farming supervision itself in rich and middle class households constitutes a feminine work category. However, I consider these four categories in more detail.

(i) The 'income earning' work for poor women, in Tikapatti, is available in lower tier labour market and for rich and middle class women employed in non-farming sector jobs, mainly in service such as teaching, nursing etc. outside village. A few of such opportunities are available in village as well. Bardhan argues that rich and middle class women falling under this category avail the opportunity for educational advancement and non-farming sector employment at the cost of their poor counterparts who do all domestic work in their homes as 'maids' and in field as 'casual labour'. This situation, she describes, as 'virtuous' and 'vicious' circles for rich and poor women, respectively.

Women from outside the labouring classes and engaged in farming either as family labour or as supervising authority, do not earn money as 'income' *per se* though such work is done out in fields. If post-harvest work is also included, a part of which is now mechanised and done outside home, the overall working environment breaks traditional

inside-outside dichotomy in gender-division of labour. Poor women are largely involved in mechanised post-harvest work for their employer rich and middle peasant households.

Though technically not 'earned' as 'income', income generated through production and marketing is shared by women, consumed by them and may be, in some cases, even 'expropriated' by them but cannot be 'remunerated' to them. This is not unusual to find in rich and middle peasant households. Therefore, it is argued that directly remunerative work is usually available to poor women in labour market. The site of this market may not be exclusively outside. It may be inside as well, for instance, women employed for post-harvest work for wage in other's compound. It is the poor women's 'remunerative work' in farm production and post harvest operations that generates 'income' (via marketing of the product) for the rich women who 'consume' it.

If 'outsiding' is liberating, poor women are most outsided, nevertheless most constrained, because they are caught up in, what Bardhan aptly describes as the 'vicious' circle. The opposite face of the coin is - it is their labour which helps rich and middle class women to be 'liberated' and therefore, to avail the 'opportunities' outside home as well as outside farming-sector. The 'constraints' of poor women becomes the precondition for liberating rich and resourceful. Obviously, liberation is class-relative.

In between middle and poor, are the 'income stretched households'. These households have to combine more than one occupation for survival. The gender division of labour is relaxed in such families. Some of these diverse occupations, which generate additional income, are:

- Manufacture of *bidi* (the local cigarette) - a unisex work done at home by women, men and children. Marketing and obtaining of work is male domain.
- Bee keeping, another unisex activity done by entire family. Men manage marketing and other production process outside home.
- Vegetable growing, a predominantly female domain in poor and lower-middle peasant families.

- Pottery, poultry, piggery and small cattle, such as goat raising are family work with women as the dominant worker. While formal marketing of cattle is male domain, an informal marketing network is maintained by both the genders.
- Casual construction work, wage earning at brick kilns, public sector development projects etc. are additional source of employment to both the genders.

Thus, it is the 'informal' and 'formal' nature of work, instead of concept of inside-outside dichotomy that better explains a genderisation of work regime in Tikapatti. I have a good case to illustrate my point.

**Case (PG/A3)** The joint family of Upendra Yadav, one of three big landlords in Tikapatti, with above 100 *bigha* land and enormous cattle asset, began as a pig-raiser, later developing it into a profitable business. The returns were invested and reinvested in buying and working big land holdings. This family has now stopped piggery and shifted substantially to farming and transactions in other cattle such as cow, buffalo and goats. This organised and formalised venture of raising, buying and selling cattle involves very little involvement of women, who happened to be the main cattle-raiser two decades ago, when Upendra had started this venture.

(ii) The 'domestic' work involves women across all classes with differing nature and volume of work. For instance, while poor and lower-middle class women have to do all cooking, cleaning and other associated domestic work, middle class women can afford a part-time maid for cleaning and other menial work related to kitchen. Rich women can more obviously afford maids / servants for helping them in cooking as well. Though a full time maid is hard to get, part-timers are available throughout the year, but supply is shrinking. Domestic work is, thus class-divided with rich women employing poor ones. For rich women, time released from domestic work is diverted to other inside work such as food processing in the case of married and aging women. Girls and young women take up education and develop other feminine hobbies and skills. Development of these skills enable them do entirely different work, which may be put under Bardhan's 'use-value production' category. Thus this category - normally confined to poor women, may be extended to middle and rich women in Tikapatti.



The release of middle and rich women from menial chores is thus achieved through maids, rather than gadgets, which are the new status goods. Though a limited relaxation in kitchen work is obtained through utensils like pressure cooker and cooking-gas (LPG) facilities, the fact remains that these 'liberating' devices are available to only a tiny section of the society. Affordable gadgets are difficult to maintain in a precarious power situation. Liberation from domestic work in case of middle and rich women is obtained, unlike in the West, not through gadgets but through subsuming labour of their poor counterparts.

(iii) The 'expenditure-saving and use-value production' work is done mostly by women in lower middle class, income stretched families. The allocation of female labour between directly remunerative and indirectly remunerative forms of work is an important variable in family survival strategies in a deprived environment. It is a means of adjustment to economic crisis and to changes in labour market. The allocation varies by family asset level and occupation, and kind of local employment opportunities available to both sexes. Household production offers more scope for indirect labour than wage earning.

In lower-middle peasant households deriving relatively stable subsistence from land, female work participation ranges from domestic chores to farming, crop processing, animal husbandry and vegetable growing. The whole range of non-domestic work is usually done in the home compound and quite often in combination with the domestic work. The informal and formal both forms of markets do operate in all such activities. It is apparent from the profile of such families (Appendix 7A) that cattle raising and milk selling constitute smaller yet stable source of additional income as well as facilitates use-value production.

(iv) The 'extended' category of women's work regime comprises many kinds of work done by poor women and children in an agrarian economy. Such works include fuel, fodder and food collection, water fetching etc. Poor households require fetching of water and firewood collection for cooking daily meals with twigs and weeds on a smoky stove. With depleting fuel and fodder, one of the recent reasons for which is increasing acres coming under banana plants, poor women and children have to walk longer for fuel collection. The sustainability and pro-poor nature of food farming cannot be ignored in this increasingly deprived environment.

Bardhan's scheme of women's work regime appears to be more conventional and does not fully incorporate the changing dimensions of women's work regime, therefore, it is only partially applicable to Tikapatti. In Bardhan's scheme, the volume of increased family labour in farming - mainly a function of smaller plots relying on self-cultivation - among lower middle and middle classes is excluded. I argue that this 'sustenance-generating' (SG) work in lower and middle classes and the 'farm-supervision' (FS) work in middle and rich classes constitute the backbone of women's work regime in Tikapatti.

MATRIX 8.3 Women's Work Regime In Tikapatti

Ser No	Categories	Peasant Classes					Weightage (Work)
		Land Less	Poor	Lower Middle	Middle	Rich	
1.	Income Earning	*	*	*	*	*	*****
2.	Domestic	*	*	*	*	*	*****
3.	Subsistence	*	*	*			***
4.	Extended	*	*				**
5.	Supervision				*	*	**
6.	Sustenance Generating		*	*	*		***
Weightage (Classes)		****	*****	****	****	***	

Women's work regime in Tikapatti, as is evident from Matrix 8.3 above includes altogether six kind of work. The weightage (for classes) shows that poor peasant women emerge as the most burdened group sharing 5 (\*\*\*\*\*) out of six works constituting total work regime. Landless, lower middle, and middle peasant women share 4 (\*\*\*\*) each. Rich women share 3 (\*\*\*). The weightage (for work) suggests that 'income-earning' and 'domestic' work both is all class pervasive with 5 (\*\*\*\*\*).

I need to draw another Matrix (8.4 below) based on Bardhan's (1989) scheme to make a comparison with Matrix 8.3 that demonstrates that how women's work regime has expanded across all classes in Tikapatti by nineties.

Matrix 8.4 Bardhan's Scheme of Women's Work Regime

Ser No	Categories	Peasant Classes					Weightage (Work)
		Land Less	Poor	Lower Middle	Middle	Rich	
1.	Income Earning	*	*				**
2.	Domestic	*	*	*	*	*	*****
3.	Subsistence		*	*			**
4.	Extended	*	*				**
Weightage (Classes)		***	****	**	*	*	

A comparative study of the two matrixes leads to some radical conclusions: first, the 'income generating' work is expanded to all classes revealing equal weightage vis-à-vis 'domestic' work; second, women's work has expanded in all the classes, nevertheless, the poor peasant women emerge as the most 'burdened' group like before; third, lower middle and rich peasant women have to share two additional tasks, while middle peasant have to share three additional tasks!

This situation leads to argue that the conventional mode of analysing women's work in terms of 'stratification', usually expressed as 'double' or 'triple' duties, needs to be revised by a 'diversification' approach in view of extensive ranges of their work regime.

### **5.1 Farm Supervisors: A New Category**

The group of farm-supervisors has most distinctly emerged in 'composite group' (CG henceforth) with men diversifying in non-farming sector and in 'pure group' (PG henceforth) with men specialising in banana farming. In both groups women bear the responsibility of substantial part of food farming. While in CG, family farms are leased out, in PG, it is either leased out (in case of large holdings) or self-cultivated (in case of medium and small). This situation leads to make a distinction between the natures of farming itself into masculine and feminine.

The strength of these farm supervisors is 19 (51.4 %) out of 37 rich and middle peasant households taking together in PG, and 21 (68%) out of 31 such households in CG. The number of men (25 out of 31) employed in non-farming sector, mainly service largely corresponds to number of women employed in farming supervision work (21 out of 31). A correlation between these two developments is not difficult to establish. How is a man with a farming background able to take up a non-farming sector job quite often in distant places? Because, women are readily available to work as 'backbone' of the rural economy at home. The 'liberty' for this sectoral and spatial diversion that men enjoy is directly associated with women's confinement to home.

The supervision responsibility usually borne by middle-aged women in joint rich and middle peasant families includes other than farming operations as well. For instance, women supervise construction work staying away at construction sites. If the family is engaged in cattle business, they supervise cattle breeding. They need to supervise post-

harvest and other allied work performed by casual labourers. Young educated women from such families aspire to get a job, which is very difficult. Their leisure is spent over use-value production work like embroidery, knitting etc.. Old women find themselves in strenuous position, nevertheless deprived of any support from young daughter in-laws. The case of Shyama (PG/B4) is relevant to cite here again, who poignantly remarks that young educated women were hardly interested in 'rustic' post-harvest work because they perceived it as 'below status'. They took up even cooking as a compulsion because it was difficult to get a cook.

Women as 'farm supervisor', in middle and rich peasant households in CG have now replaced men to a greater extent. They have acquired the main 'actor's' position in a subsistence-farming work regime in absence of men. This provides strong basis to argue that peasantry characteristics in CG is retained mainly by women in Tikapatti.

The richest, in Tikapatti, are those households, which take up banana farming along with food in CG. This may be substantiated through the case of Virendra and Sheela Mandal's (CG/B4) family, which earns Rs 3.5 *lakh* (.35 million) through diversification in business and banana farming. This is the highest income generating family, in both groups. The credit for economic prosperity through banana in PG and through non-farm diversification in CG in all classes must go to women.

## **5.2 Resource Profile Approach: A New 'Political' Category**

A shift of approach from what women are not able to do, to what they are doing, seeks to address the vital question - how are they doing? Located in weaker or stronger resource positions, how do they emerge as dynamic actors? The Resource Profile Approach (RPA) is relevant to address this question because a classical Marxist class concept essentially views women representing their class interests, subsuming their gender identity and interests. What finally decides the overall strength and weakness of a household within social hierarchy? Here is a point of deviation from a Marxist concept of peasant classification. It is not the economic strength from farm-sector alone, but the overall strength (i.e. that includes the farming and non-farming sector) supported by political, social, and cultural networks, which decides a household's relative strengths and weaknesses in Tikapatti.

Thus without over-simplifying a difference between households, it is possible to establish an underlying set of principles for the classification of households on the basis of its resource profile approach (Wood, 1990; Lewis, 1992). This approach is broadly similar to that suggested by Swift (1989) which involves assessing the resources that the household has at its disposal. The categories of resources go beyond those normally perceived by economics. Therefore, it is more comprehensive.

The RPA, thus, provides a better understanding of the resource position of a family, which significantly influences its market options. The RPA categories also interact with each other. Different factors, such as the age and demographic structure of a household, have implications not only for the human resource base of the household but also for its social and cultural resource position. White (1992) has noted in her Bangla desh experience that age of the female 'head' has important implications as to whether the community seeks to impose gender norms concerning her status as a woman. For instance, an older woman may have to face relaxed restrictions on her mobility, purdah and labour activities.

Another instance could be marriage and the dowry associated with it. If marriage is interpreted as one set of social resources, then with a dowry system, a female headed household, which is poor in material resources, is likely to find it much more difficult to arrange a secure and favourable marriage for a daughter than a female headed household, which is rich in material resources. The cases of Tarini and Madhuri Devi cited (below) provide supportive evidence to this situation.

**Tarini Devi (PG/G20)**, a widow in her 40s, is struggling hard to find a groom, of a suitable age and with secure income, for her 18-year-old daughter. She is a petty sharecropper cum casual labourer. She has to allow her single son to migrate to Punjab for accumulating some money for the daughter's marriage, though she strongly needs her son to be with her at home to look for a match.

And,

**Madhuri Devi (PG/C11)** is also struggling tough to get a 'suitable' match for her daughter, though the suitability criterion is a 'sensitive' man (of course with good income and a placement in respectable job) from a cultured family. In absence of her husband, Madhuri is very 'conscious' over this affair, though money is not a problem for her and she has enough money for dowry provisions.

These two women have many things common in them, such as both are widow; each has two children, a son and a daughter; and both are *de facto* household heads. Yet they are

very different by their material resource profiles. This difference puts the former in a position to not only 'depend' for money, to a greater extent, on his son but also to compel her to become deprived of his company. The latter, however, is able to engage his son in 'quest for a suitable match' for her daughter.

The RPA takes into account social networking, community property resources and mutual support-system (i.e., the relational aspect of the productive forces). Looking at the social and cultural resource profile of households, another important set of factors is the range of contacts the household can utilise among kin and neighbours. Networks of patronage and reciprocity are vital resources in Tikapatti. The RPA contains four standard categories: material, human, social, and cultural. In Tikapatti (in Bihar too), I must include one more category - political.

'Political profile' refers to political affiliation and relationship to the key actors in the community, local administration and the state. The location of the family within political network is an asset, which facilitates access to material and to some extent, human resources in Tikapatti, which is already historically known for its significant participation in political processes. Politics is a tradition in Tikapatti, where at least over a dozen families with historical roots in direct politics are still present. One such case is illustrated below.

**Case (CG/D9)** Prabhat, the son of Shivrani Devi and Ramnarain Toofan (the old freedom fighters and social workers) joined electoral politics taking advantage of his father's political profile. Toofan is a veteran Gandhian and still active in running a *Khadi* centre at Rupauli HQ. His political connections are widespread. This helped Prabhat taking up electoral politics as a 'career'. He, initially, joined the Congress party, but changed his mind in early 1990s in favour of the Janta Dal, where he could have better prospects. Later, he joined Janta Dal. His close affiliation with ruling political party not only enables him accrue more benefits and opportunities for elevating his personal resource position, but also helps him create a balance of power vis-à-vis 'aggressive' political temperament of Yadav caste people (chapter-7). Some Kaivarth caste people informed that the main reason for Prabhat (a *Kaivarth* caste man) to join Janta Dal was to 'fight back' aggressive political behaviour of Yadav caste people in their den (i.e. Janta Dal).

The new comers, without a family backing, are also many. The case of Bhawana Devi represents this category of political profile.

The CPI activist **Bhawana Devi (PG/C2, cited before)** is a new political entrant. She mobilises poor (both men and women) on wage and other issues. Her local networks are extended to Rupauli block and political connections (within party) to

Purnea district HQ. While this strong political profile enables her get access to inputs, credit and market network, it also helps her fight (for the poor) against the local level injustices. With her strong political connections and affiliations, she acquires a distinct position in the village.

### 5.3 Gender, Market And Survival Strategies

In analysing survival strategies, a distinction has to be made between households with varying sets of resource profile. The effects of survival strategies on women's work depend on available market options and differ across the household classes.

The basic crisis for the landless households is how to survive and secure subsistence. Their typical survival strategy in the face of a slack labour market and low earnings from male employment is to allocate more of female time to expenditure-saving and use-value production work through low-yield forms of self-employment and release males to seek better employment.

For small peasant households, the survival strategy is to diversify the activities in and around the household production unit. In such families almost all farming work is done by family labour in and outside home. They cultivate or help cultivation, raise small cattle and do post-harvest work in other's compounds.

The lower-middle peasant households using intensive family labour with little other means of production have to pursue a mix of production and earning activities as their strategy in order to survive market risks, weather risks, health and life-cycle risks (i.e. all the risks associated with too little surplus, in hand). In such families women have to be intensely involved in production, usually inside the home - an essential part of which is income-conserving and use-value production activities.

Migration, in such a slack labour market situation is undertaken as an alternative to and / or in combination with, this kind of strenuous involution of female labour as part of the survival strategy. Males, thus released for a better employment, have no other option but to migrate to highly paid distant labour markets. This common survival strategy involves an increase in the female share of farm work and in the juvenile share of housework and collection chores at home.

### 5.3.1 Marketisation of Artisan Skills

The transformation of artisan skills into marketable services has also taken place as a survival strategy. The economic status of some of the artisan families has gone up over the decade while others have become part of the casual labour market. How have the conditions of the market instigated these upward and downward mobilities?

The traditional artisan skills were multifarious - ranging from the services rendered by barbers, washermen, and blacksmiths to manufacturers of different kind of products for the household's regular as well as ceremonial consumption. The latter category of artisans formed a significant part of what is now termed as 'household economics'.

With the market penetrating the lifestyle of people through modernisation, the importance of the services rendered by artisans grew and opportunities for advancing those skills through modern mechanical devices were available. The sense of community has gradually eroded and replaced by the sense of competitive endeavour. The frequent exposure to urban society encouraged service-rendering segment of artisan community to enter these wider markets. This resulted in opening of laundries, hairdressing saloons, tailoring shops, mechanical repair centres, initially in village market and later extended to outside. Some of the poor members of same occupational fraternity were engaged as staff casual workers. It is this artisan segment, which gradually advanced its economic condition and social status. The family of Manohar Thakur (a barber family) is a fit case to cite here as instance.

**Case (CG/F5)** Manohar Thakur is running a hairdressing saloon and a tailoring shop in the village market. Her wife Manorma, stitches clothes at home. She also teaches some girls. She wants to open a 'beauty parlour' for women.

Those, for whom opportunities for modernisation and marketisation of traditional skills were not available, were left with no other option but either to retain their traditional expertise or to migrate. Hence, the incidence of outmigrant males from some artisan groups, barbers, in particular, is high.

The overall change in the life-style of people brought about by the coupling effect of urbanisation and modernisation has reduced demand for traditional skills, such as mat



making, house and *mandap* (platform) decoration, bucket and rope making, chair-weaving and dozens of such other household products made of bamboo, jute and agricultural by-products. This has depressed the economic condition of this segment and forced men to join the local labour market. Women, in such families, took over the responsibility to retain some of this traditional artisan expertise, as the informal market in such products was not completely eliminated.

Between these two dominant segments are a few artisan families, which still rely on their traditional expertise for a livelihood. Even men in these families have chosen a difficult path of challenging market rather than succumb to its might.

**Bateshwar and Kalawati Mandal (CG/E1)** is such a committed couple, which despite serious hardships have retained their bee-keeping expertise as the main source of their livelihood. Bee keeping is a commitment for Bateshwar.

The case of Meera, though something different from the context above, is amazing.

**Meera (Spl C/1)** an educated young woman from a barber family does not hesitate doing traditional *jajmani* work 'defying' her husband who runs a hairdressing saloon in village market. The kind of work she does is supposed to be an 'inferior' job for an educated woman. She argues that work is work, it is neither 'inferior' nor 'superior'. Since all women cannot go to a haircutting saloon placed in market, therefore, other woman (referring herself) has to make 'market' available to them at home.

### 5.3.2 Upward-Mobility Strategy: 'Virtuous' and 'Vicious' Circles

The survival strategies of poor serve as the input for the upward-mobility strategies of the rich. The aspiration of the rich is to maintain as well as enhance their economic status via diversification in non-farm profit-generating activities. The upward-mobility strategy in middle class households has produced various gender-relative outcomes, such as; diversion of women to farm-supervision work, promoting girl's education; and encouraging educated women for urban sector jobs.

All this, however, is possible only if middle class women are able to spare enough time and energy, which is achieved through engaging domestic maids for inside work. This enables them to invest their time and labour in child quality - a long-term strategy for upward mobility, and to engage in a variety of status enhancement work. The off-farm

occupational diversion of men is basically an upward mobility strategy, the essential implication of which, for women, is their increasing involvement in farming work (4.1). The emergence of the farm-supervisors in rich and middle class families is a function of upward mobility strategy.

The upwardly-mobile strategies of the rich women, thus succeed at the expense of their poor counterparts - domestic maids, bent under double workload with their own children overworked and deprived of care and education. The most serious effect of this menial workload of domestic maids and of other low-paid workers is that their daughters are deprived of school as they have to share their mother's domestic responsibilities at home. This includes caring for their siblings, housekeeping, helping with the adult piece wage work and quite often doing wage-work themselves to supplement the adult earnings. The incidence of withdrawal of girls from school by the age of twelve is higher (than for boys) among poor, precisely for this reason.

This situation creates at one end a 'virtuous' circle of advancement, which, in turn has a liberating effect for rich and middle class women and a 'vicious circle' of excessive female load of low-wage work, at the other end, linked to female educational disadvantage and high rates of infant and child mortality for poor women. In effect, depriving them of a minimum quality of life. Class here strengthens patriarchy by enabling the retention of patriarchal system of privileges and penalties and by prevention of direct confrontation on basic issues - such as the hierarchic sexual division of labour and unequal rights (Nyple, 1993).

## **6. GENDER AND OUTMIGRATION**

How are women sandwiched between double pressures of local and outside markets regulating human lives? This is one aspect of the migration scenario. The other is how have women emerged as the dominant and decisive actors across all land-owning classes - big or small - in production and marketing processes, while managing their traditional domain inside home simultaneously. Contrary to the usual findings in Bihar and India, lower tier migration has produced a group of enterprising farmers (see Chapter-7). Tikapatti provides good evidence for the above three trends.

The increased labour demand in more developed regions, away from home in the context of a depressed labour market situation at home, pushes out men for work leaving their families behind. The resulting shortage of male labour at home consequently pushes women into the local labour market, where their physical and economic exploitation is intensified under double pressure of low wage and increased hours of work.

The crushing load of multiple works of poor and landless women, and the juvenile contribution to this work, needs to be seen in the male migration context. Loss of immediate male earnings at home, for any reason, entails increased female participation in low-yield or low-wage work. The seasonal drop in remunerative employment is accompanied by a further increase in female loads of expenditure-saving activities, kitchen gardening, animal husbandry and a variety of subsistence work. Even in those families with regular remittance, these female activities are normal.

Male migration from small and lower-middle peasant families has substantially raised female share of subsistence production work. Such families, in the face of unchanged technology for transplanting, weeding and harvesting, have to bring higher proportion of their smaller holdings under direct management of women. They have to shoulder most of the farming work left by the migrant, along with marketing work - traditionally a male domain. Doing more of the marketing and farming work eventually redeems the imposition of harder labour on women by eroding the norms of female seclusion. For instance, female seclusion associated with taboos, like prohibiting women from touching a plough no longer exist, though they rarely operate plough due to physical reasons. This has definite impact on the process of attitudinal change.

The small section of migrant 'entrepreneurs' which bought land, acquired land on leases, entered into reverse tenancy contracts, and above all entered cash-crop arena with little capital (all aiming at creating some productive assets capable of generating a sustainable source of livelihood) has to depend on women's significant contribution in production, management, and marketing in the frequent absence of men. The entrepreneurial behaviour of migrant males, thus heavily depends on the key female support. Males in such families act as material facilitator, while females play as the main actor.

Male migration has different implications for women in joint and nuclear families, more obviously, in labouring families. In nuclear families, with one adult male income-earner

with an other adult female engaged in some seasonal non-domestic labour, the migrant male has to ensure his family's adequate income and security during his absence. He has to obtain advances where necessary (the larger the advance, the longer he can be away) and remit his savings back to his family. Such labouring families thus retain some of their clientelist dependency upon patrons as sources of loans and local seasonal employment for women. The dilemma for the patrons is that if they extend loans to client labour they may just be assisting their ability to seasonally migrate thus strengthening the labourer's client's position in the local labour market but if they do not extend loans or provide employment for the womenfolk, they may lose the good will of the labourers for the peak labour demand periods.

In joint labouring families, one or two adult male members (18-25 age group and usually unmarried) migrate to support the family as well as to create some additional resources for themselves. While migration in such cases is directly associated with survival, the next purpose is upward-mobility, even in labouring class. In case of unmarried young migrants women's position as mother is strengthened (see cases PG/ G14, 16,18 and F5 below).

But in case of a married youth, his wife's position as a young woman within a joint family may become weaker vis-à-vis the old woman, i.e. the migrant's mother. One such case is of Dhamania Devi (Spl/2), who is living at the mercy of her in-laws and younger brother in-law because her husband's remittance is fully controlled by them and she has to work hard for her own survival.

The concept of an 'upwardly mobile' family strategy, in Tikapatti, thus implies a situation where outmigration, urban or rural, upper-tier or lower-tier labour markets, is opted for as a strategy with a view to generate additional income and resource to enhance the economic status of a family. Poverty can be a relative concept: i.e. relative to the normal standard of living in a society. Similarly, status enhancement can be a relative concept. For instance, for an educated rural youth, an urban sector employment such as school teaching becomes a survival strategy, even if he has 15 *bigha* of land sufficient for his family to survive in a village. But serious unemployment in non-farming sector and profit-opportunities in farming sector with cash crops are challenging this notion. This change is reflected in agriculture graduates and educated men taking up farming. For instance, Arun Kr Mandal (PG/C1), an agriculture graduate, left his government job to take up profit-generating banana farming. He planted banana in 2 *bigha*, food crops in 5 *bigha*,

bamboo and mango groves in 1 *bigha*. This enthused farmer with 12 *bigha* family farm and tractor in joint ownership gets 3 crops a year.

The phenomenon of outmigration as an 'upwardly mobile' family strategy thus requires careful examination, because it may not 'essentially' be linked to only rich and resourceful families. How the poor utilise outside labour market opportunities initially as a survival strategy and later, for the economic advancement aiming at upward mobility may be illustrated through cases described below:

**Sanjay (PG/G18)**, the only son of Rajkumar Jaisawal and Nirmala migrated to Delhi at 20 to work in a shop to supplement the family income. Rajkumar is a petty shopkeeper in Tikapatti. Sanjay remits Rs 8,000 per annum. Migration, for him, is a temporary survival and economic elevation strategy, as he wants to develop his own business in which the present saving will be invested.

**Kranti (PG/G14)**, son of Karu Mandal and Chania Devi (a farm labourer and petty sharecropper) migrated to Punjab in 1991 at 17. He remits Rs 7,000 per annum. Kranti aims to work in Punjab for a few more years to improve the economic condition of the family. Remittance has already raised the resource-profile of the family as it is invested in cattle raising. This family has bought two bullocks, one buffalo, one cow, 6 goats and 15 hens so far. Outmigration in this case is also more than a survival strategy.

**Punkaj (PG/E5)**, son of Narayan and Bimla Mandal, a petty farmer has migrated to Bombay to work as a domestic servant at 18. He remits Rs 7,800 per annum. This joint family of 9 members owns two bullocks, one buffalo, and 5 goats. Remittances are invested in cattle raising, which now constitutes the second largest source of income. Some money is invested in repairing an old house, which now generates some rental income. Punkaj wants to do either his own business or buy his own farm. He is saving for this expected investment. Outmigration in this case is more than a survival strategy.

**Umesh (PG/G16)** migrated to Punjab at 20. He remits Rs 7,000 per annum for his mother, Lalita, a farm labourer. Umesh can stay at home for earning livelihood for his two-member family, but he wants to improve his economic condition at least to the level of a small farmer with at least 5 *bigha* of land. Outmigration, in this case, is also more than a survival strategy.

The phenomenon of outmigration as 'survival' strategy also requires a careful examination, as it may not be always associated with poor. How a middle class family may have to opt for migration as 'survival' strategy is illustrated through the case described below.

**Sushil Kr Mandal (CG/D3)**, a primary school teacher is working in Araria, about 40-50 Km away from Tikapatti. His wife, Kanti has to supervise 5-*bigha* family

farm cultivated by hired labour. Other inputs are rented-in from factor markets. Their two daughters are taking up higher education (B.Sc. and I.Sc.) and a son is pursuing technical education (all stay in Pune town). Kanti's mother-in-law stays with her in village. Outmigration, in this case may be treated as a survival strategy because for an educated family with only 5 *bigha* of land, taking up teaching job becomes a survival strategy to maintain the existing standard of living.

Since male migration also means going away from 'home', the direct consequence for the female left behind is getting more rooted in soil, as they have to assume more responsibilities than before. The boundary between the 'home' and the 'away' once crossed knows no spatial limit for the migrants. Outmigration is conducive in economic terms in either case. However, it takes its price in terms of emotional deprivation and disintegration of family life in different ways from both poor and rich. Poor, obviously, have to pay heavy, in general. The extra-economic gender implications of outmigration are described and analysed in Chapter 9 below.

The labour mobility transcends all frontiers for families in Tikapatti: rural to rural migration to the green pockets, at the one end and rural to urban to Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay, on the other. While migration to the lower-tier labour markets to Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi has taken place for 100-125 families, the number of upper-tier labour migrants is in between 150-200, most of them employed in service-sector jobs. Households with male migrants to distant locations thus constitute at least 25 percent of the total households. This excludes temporary migration to nearby localities.

The effects of male migration on female role in economic and social decision-making are not always clear-cut. It depends on whether the migrant male is available on required occasions; on the structure of power in a household between men and women as well as among women themselves; on how divided are women within household hierarchy; and whether they are united in mutual-support networks; and many more local factors.

Outmigration, in Tikapatti, has forced peasant families allow their women out in fields. Even daughter-in-laws from middle class families were called out of their veils since seventies with outmigration and subsequent local labour shortage. Families with no land and / or with tiny holdings were actually headed and run by women after their men migrated.

Thus two dominant gendered structural effects of migration in Tikapatti are: women's large scale entry into the labour market among lower classes; and evolution of *de facto* female headed households with varying degree of exposure to public spheres in general, and different type of markets, in particular. These two processes have significant implications for women. The traditional gender relations usually explained in terms of an inside-outside dichotomy is significantly transformed. The traditional gender-based (or biased?) household structure is changed. This, in turn, has initiated a process of significant change in the arena of gender relations itself across all classes. I pursue this analysis in Chapter 10 below.

## 7. GENDER AND MARKETS

The market is traditionally supposed to be a more inferior occupation and culturally 'prohibited' area of operation (than farming) for women among upper castes. This cannot be explained in usual terms of prohibiting women from outside arenas, though the notion of putting women on a culturally higher plain offers a more realistic explanation. Tikapatti is predominantly a middle caste village with dominant *Kaivarth* caste people having acquired some upper caste cultural traits, such as inhibiting women from interacting with the formal market. Though informal transactions between women across classes have been traditionally permitted, interaction with the formal market is culturally perceived as male domain. Caste offers opportunities as well as constrains women in formal markets. For instance, interaction with the market in case of a *Yadav* caste woman is accepted as normal because they have remained traditional traders, but for a *Kaivarth* caste woman, this may be seen as unconventional behaviour. A careful distinction between 'intentionally ingrained' inside-outside dichotomy and 'culturally evolved' inside-outside preferential in gender division of labour has to be made here.

### 7.1 Factors Market

Women enter into factors market through intra-family and community linkages. It is the 'exchange' rather than the 'ownership' of factors of production, which is now central to the whole production process (Chapter 7:3.1.2). While women have remained 'unrecognised' and 'invisible' in ownership-centred production processes, in changing scenario of exchange-centred production processes, their interaction with and access to this arena

has become a prerequisite for their 'liberation' from the invisibility syndrome. In an interlocked market (Wood, 1993) situation, which perpetuates resource-relativity, women and poor have to rely heavily on intra-family and community linkages, which underpin informal markets in factors of production.

Women as supervisors from rich and middle peasant households and as self-cultivators in lower-middle and poor peasant households with migrant males have to take decisions in tenancy dealing as well as in employing wage labour. While the leasing-in mode of labour incidence is higher in CG, the wage mode is higher in PG, in general. The supervision responsibility has made women more conscious about financial and market management in factor markets. They take decisions and ensure acceptance of them. This has relaxed the strict sexual labour division in factor's market.

## **7.2 Feminisation of Labour Market**

The feminisation of labour market in Tikapatti has taken place at three points of time over last decades. The first stage was marked by lower tier outmigration (1970s), which pushed poor women *en mass* into the casual labour market. The second stage was marked by the new technology induced agricultural growth (1980s), which due to cultural reasons, led to withdrawal of middle class women from fieldwork and their shift to supervision. This increased the hiring of female wage labour for field operations and post-harvest work in the farmer's yards, to the extent that machine milling was not resorted to. The ratio of managerial to manual work in middle class families has significantly increased over last two decades needs no further explanation. The third stage was marked by the enterprising shift to banana plantation (early 1990s), which due to its exclusive dependence on male labour necessitated transfer of men from food sector and increased concentration of female labour in the same.

The feminisation of the labour market in Tikapatti has made poor women more 'visible' than before. But, the complex local conditions hardly allowed them 'assert' and bargain for a higher wage. The gender wage disparity, in spite of their crucial role in production system and high female labour demand persists - partly, due to gender bias associated with cultural norms and partly, due to weaker bargaining power and lack of organisation among them. Simple supply demand economics does not work here. Bhawana Devi (the CPI activist, cited before) informed that organising of female labour on wage issue does



not succeed beyond a limit, because the employers threaten that they would replace them with external male labour - which on a little higher payment would work more efficiently. A competitive situation between male and female labour is thus created.

Depressed labour markets tend to act adversely towards those with fewer marketable skills and employment options and those supplying labour on an irregular basis. Female labour is most concentrated in food sector with depressed labour markets. They are neither skilled nor regular. They have to encounter cultural bias and fear of being 'ousted'. The efforts of organising has resulted in some gain, but this gain (i.e. wage enhancement) has to be accommodated always at a moderate level, because food farming is not profitable.

The changes in inter-family linkages with natural disintegration of joint families and migration-induced reorganisation of joint and nuclear families also have serious implications for poor women. The eroding of a community-based support system is leaving them solely dependent on labour market and weakens their bargaining position. The traditional support system rooted in the community, that is the structure of inter-family linkages, falls apart in the process of dislocation and disintegration.

In spite of their weaker position in labour market, it is encouraging that poor women consider working in field as 'superior' than working in *aangan* (courtyard). Fieldwork often helps them obtain small plots for share cropping from their employers, who are often rich and middle class women. They prefer fieldwork to housework and post-harvest work to paid domestic work.

### **7.3 Goods Market**

Marketing is a male domain but one can find a fair number of female vegetable vendors, petty traders, and other petty producers to sell their products in *Tikapatti haat* (local market place). Outmigration from poor artisan and petty trader families has pushed women out in to goods market in a bid to survive. They can be found selling their home-made products as mobile vendors as well.

The local informal and formal markets in food grains serve the poor peasant producers and their women both. With lack of access to outside markets, in the face of high rental

charges for transport, they have to rely more completely on the local *haat* in village. The rich and middle peasant female headed households find poor men and women as their best 'channels' for marketing their produce or at least a part of it in local as well as outside markets. For the poor, such services constitute one of the sources of their income. Such informal arrangements within community strengthen social networking. Market contacts and links with off-village institutions are also critical to female-headed household's survival strategies. The physical exclusion of women from key market places may lead female headed households to become involved in more brokered market relationships than men. In his study on credit issues in Bangla desh, McGregor (1991) draws similar conclusions. The internally brokered market often operates with the help of the male children.

#### **7.4 Job Market**

With rising educational status among young rich and middle class women, a preference for the job market over and at the expense of domestic work is strongly revealed. This is constrained by their class status, educational status and job availability inside and in the close vicinity of the village. For instance, for a middle class educated woman, working as a peon or a midwife or a sales person is supposed to be a 'low status and undignified' work. The sense of dignity in outside work often prevails over the needs. Women themselves cherish the notion of work status suited to her class status. I located at least half a dozen cases of educated middle class women with a formal training for teaching, who in absence of a suited job opportunity 'prefer' to remain unemployed rather than opting for a 'low status' job though the family needs more income. This can be further substantiated by the fact that 8 out of 10 highly educated women in PG and 4 out of 11 in CG are unemployed. The reason for more employed women (7 of 11) in CG is their exposure to the job market outside village, often encouraged by males.

#### **7.5 Credit Market**

In peasant production systems (Chakraborty, 1986), women's petty cash earning from cottage industry and animal husbandry generates a reliable infusion of cash flow, especially during the agriculturally lean seasons. Much more than this, women have traditionally remained dominant actors in informal credit market in Tikapatti. Lending between women across all classes and between resourceful women and poor men for

earning small interest is a common practice. In rich peasant families, female heads are the dominant source of credit for the poor. This informal credit-market is intricately networked by women. It is amazing that often illiterate and / or less educated women control and run this informal credit market. With the ensuing growth of formal credit and financial markets and monetisation of the factor markets women have started interacting with these as well though retaining their informal credit and financial economies.

Women's interaction with formal financial market began a few years ago, through the agents of 'insurance companies' active in the village. Dr R P Venu, a homeopath doctor simultaneously active as the Life Insurance Company (LIC) agent as well and Sanjiva, the Peerless company agent reported that the women's entry into the formal credit economy remarkably increased by early 1990s. Women constituted thirty percent (173) of the total policy holders with the LIC in 1993 and Venu expected this percentage to rise to 50 by 1995. These policy holders were petty traders, peasants and service-holders. Sanjiv, a new entrant to this field of activity, reported that in 1993 he was able to cover 65 families under the Peerless saving schemes, of which middle class women represented 30. The total money value of the policies taken by the holders was Rs 190,000 and total investment in terms of quarterly, half-yearly and yearly instalments exceeded Rs 19,000.

Women are now more future-conscious than before - says Venu. They are better (than men) to be mobilised for saving and investment activities provided the financial market approaches to them at home. Housewives are shrewd enough to convince their migrant and / or non-migrant 'busy' husbands to invest for future. Their small savings constitute a good source of investment policies and their saving behaviour is more conscious and enthusiastic. Their tendency to invest small savings meticulously and drive for interest earning is stronger than men. In the face of complicated banking procedures, they find LIC and Peerless agents easily accessible and reliable to invest their savings.

Venu reports that drive for saving and investment among women and men both have increased. The apparent reasons are increase in income and awareness created by the saving company agents. About 90 percent of the service-holders are covered under the LIC policies. Migrant labourer's families constitute another social group opting for LIC policies, though banking facilities are available.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This is something unconventional to conclude with a Matrix (8.5 presented below). Nevertheless I do because, the essence of the whole analysis of the findings from Tikapatti is possible to sum up in this Matrix below.

Matrix 8.5: Key Pointers to Feminine (Informal) and Masculine (formal) Regimes

S.No	Key Pointers	Food (Informal)	Banana (Formal)
1.	Managed by Genders	Female	Male
2.	Nature of Farming	Sustainable	Short-term
3.	Nature of Labour	Enduring	Strenuous
4.	Production for	Sustenance	Market
5.	Incidence of Family Labour	Very high	No-existence
6.	Incidence of Female labour	Very high	Negligible
7.	Modes of Labour	<i>Bataidari</i>	Hired labour
8.	Management of Labour	Community network ( intra-family linkage)	Market Network (though brokers)
9.	Form of Leasing	Informal	Formal
10.	Mode of Wage	Kind and Cash	Cash
11.	Nature of Market	Interlocked	Formally networked
12.	Extension of Market	Local	National
13.	Credit Market	Internally brokered	Formally brokered

The whole productive regime in Tikapatti appears to be sharply divided into food and banana sectors. While women dominate the former, men the latter. The gender division of labour and other factors of production suggest a informal-formal dialectics rather than an inside-outside dichotomy. The market-infused development is giving way to a feminine regime of production vis-à-vis a masculine regime. Women in various capacities and multifarious roles as labour, as producer, as manager, and as farm supervisor are active in production processes and re-discovering their roles mainly concentrated in food farming. This feminisation of food sector appears to lead towards creating a feminine route to women liberation.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **WOMEN LIBERATION: THE REPRODUCTIVE REGIME**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter explores how far are women able to carve out space for themselves to establish their agency in productive regime. The associated enquiry in this chapter is about how their stake as producers helps them assert stronger roles as reproducers. With a focus on 'production', the mainstream development appears to view the 'reproductive regime' as a 'passive' recipient of the implications, losses, and benefits conferred upon it by the market forces. The dominant vision about the reproductive regime that confines it to biological reproduction is 'reductionist' in essence and 'prescriptive'<sup>1</sup> in content. The vast arena of reproduction encapsulates creation and continuation of life as well as life-supporting systems. Seen from this position the whole production activity becomes the 'means' for the reproduction, as the reproduction itself becomes the 'end' for the human existence and life world systems. I, therefore, argue that reproduction is the basic production process and production is the 'means' for sustaining of this basic production process, i.e. the reproduction. This is a 'reversal' of the dominant paradigm relating to production and reproduction, which assigns centre stage to the former and peripheral to the later.

I try to approach different arenas of 'reproductive regime' in Tikapatti, precisely with a holistic vision stated above, though retention of the 'prescriptive' contents (of reproductive regime) is imperative for two reasons: one, lack of this 'vision' during data collection; and two, evolving of this thesis over a long time (see Chapter 6).

#### **2. HEALTH, AILMENT-CURE, RELAXING OF PATRIARCHY**

A holistic view of health encapsulates those activities and behaviours, which actually produce good or bad health. This qualitatively differs from the normal concept of health

care and services explained in terms of medicines and medical care and medical facilities. Access to health facilities means access to curative medical facilities. The concept of health for women that is in practice is further confined to birth control and use of contraceptives.

The general health condition, therefore, cannot be assessed by available health facilities alone. Health issue needs to be studied in terms of both aspects - preventive as well as curative. The preventive aspect of health includes the overall existing physical environment and life conditions for the people. Historically infamous<sup>2</sup> as a malaria-prone area, the entire old district of Purnea remained a 'black spot' from health viewpoint and Tikapatti was no exception to this. The climatic condition and quality of water, in particular, even today is not healthy enough. Malaria, black-fever, tuberculosis, still persists. Some cases of leprosy are also found.

How is this negative physical environment for health is combated by the curative measures? This is a big question requiring a response in the context of health policy of the state, which takes a fragmented view of health issues. I, therefore, have to rely on the total health facilities available and people's access to these across the classes, in general and women, in particular. Public provisions for health, in rural Bihar, practically contain a package of certain medicines and medical techniques of 'ailment cure'. Therefore, I prefer to call it 'ailment-cure' facility instead of health facility.

There are three sets of ailment cure facilities - the first set includes the medical facilities available under the public health system; second set comprises ten medical practitioners pursuing different methods of ailment-cure of which four are allopathic practitioners and six homeopaths; and the third set includes all those traditionally evolved indigenous methods of ailment cure, many of which are developed and practiced by women.

Tikapatti has a state run small hospital with two female health workers, as a special facility for women. The village is facilitated with a Block administration level medical officer (a doctor) who use to pay periodic visit to the village. A community-supported centre for 'Naturopathy' located at Rupauli should be treated as additional facility available to people in Tikapatti. Ramnarain Toofan, a resident of the village, runs this.

The normal health condition of women in Tikapatti needs to be assessed first by physical and social environment they live in and secondly, by medical facilities available and accessible to them. The normal health condition for women is poorer than for men. 'Many of them suffer from ailments associated with reproductive system' - says Meena Das, the senior 'Female Health Worker (FHW henceforth) attending female patients in the village. They usually suffer from uterus relapse, anaemia, normal weakness, and backache, all of these associated with the reproductive system. The reasons are many, ranging from a poor quality of life conditions to lack of awareness about health. The poor availability of and accessibility to ailment-cure facilities often aggravate their health problems. The varying degree of cultural constraints about exposing of physical disorders related to reproductive system before family members (even before their husbands and elder women) persist across all the classes. Meena Das reported that menstrual disorders were common and cases of miscarriage too were usual among poor hard working women.

Women are more prone (than men) to common physiological ailments, such as tuberculosis, *kalazar* (black fever) and malaria. Regular smoking<sup>3</sup> and work in *bidi* (small cigarette) factory are main reasons for proneness to tuberculosis. *Bidi* making is one of many additional source of income generation for men and women in poor families and this is done at home as well. The FHW reported about 40 women suffering from leprosy in village. Leprosy is still believed to be an incurable hereditary disease<sup>4</sup>, which can doom the marriage prospect of a girl, if she suffers at early age.

The FHW reported that the government sponsored free of cost contraception facilities, though often inadequate, evokes encouraging response from women (much more than men) across all classes. They contact the FHW for advice on family planning and birth control. The use of contraceptives is most frequent among upper and middle class women. Poor illiterate women are hesitant to its use.

Bhawana Devi (referred in chapter 8 as well) informed that in the course of organising poor women on economic issues it was possible to create awareness on these issues as well. The response from some poor women was encouraging and varied. The awareness, once created, went beyond the issue of whether to 'use' or 'not to use' contraceptives. For instance, some of them began protesting against their mother in-laws and dominant male members of the family controlling their reproductive regime.

This increased the cases of medical termination of unwanted pregnancies across all classes, hitherto confined to only upper and middle class women as a concealed act. I have one such case to cite below:

**Case (PG / F24):** Chano, a petty sharecropper with three children, became pregnant. Her husband and mother in-law both protested her decision to go for medical termination of pregnancy (the facility available at the local hospital). Chano, after confiding with the FHW finally decided to go for not only abortion but sterilisation as well and did it without informing her husband and mother in-law. When asked about how they (husband and mother in-law) reacted to her act, she said that they 'fiercely reacted' but 'my act was not possible to revert'! So after a few days they became silent.

Such voices of protest often now get support from the husbands who under pressure of their mothers hitherto remained hesitant. It appears that it is the age and relational hierarchy rather than patriarchy that apparently controls the reproductive regime in a family, though family structure itself is patriarchal. The mobilisation on 'economic issues' helps to open such non-economic issues and encourage women act stronger (than before) not only in making a decision (as in case of Chano above) but also influence their husband's opinions. Nevertheless a poor woman resorts to contraception or goes for sterilisation after bearing four children, on average, in Tikapatti. This average is three for upper and middle class women. The cases of sterilisation are found more than vasectomy suggesting a pro-male anti-reproduction social attitude.

Frequent cases of unwanted pregnancies among married, unmarried and widows suggest a liberal but concealed sexual interaction, most numerous in families with lower / upper tier outmigration. This transcends both caste and class. This was authenticated by Lakho Devi, an old midwife who aborts concealed pregnancies among unmarried and young widow women using traditional methods. She informed that lack of adequate facilities as well as 'apprehensions' of getting such concealed affairs exposed at the government hospital, 'local methods' are preferred. This helps poor women most in need. Rich women can afford to go to a private nursing home in Pune.

### 3. EDUCATION: HEAVY OPPORTUNITY COST AND RESOURCE RELATIVITY

Education, usually defined in terms of formal education has little to do with raising consciousness and therefore, has very little liberating potential. The consciousness level and educational profile of women and men, therefore, has to be assessed within a



broader education perspective framework that includes informal education, social and political awareness, and cultural consciousness. This radically differs from the normal concept of literacy. Tikapatti is a better (than an average north Bihar village) conscious and educated society. The impact of Gandhian ideology has deeply entrenched the importance of education, in general and female education, in particular, in the psyche of the people. I need to remind here that the criteria for identification of a household as 'educated' in IRP table (Appendix 7A) essentially takes into account female education.

While the official records put female literacy rate at 18 percent (40 percent for male), the empirical data speaks of about 300 girls / women with high school level formal education and at least 15-20 of them are college going. Many others graduate and post-graduate are taking up courses at home as 'private students'. The number of primary school level educated girls and women is fairly high. The female-male ratio in primary schools is about 40:60 and in high school, it is 30-70, according to institutional sources.

Table 9.1 below is constructed on the basis of Col 2 of the IRP table. I have presented PG and CG both economic groups together and peasantry class-wise in table to obtain a simple position of female education. As stated above the category of 'educated' essentially includes only those households, which have educated women.

The table (9.1) reveals 61 percent of the total households as 'educated'. This means in 61 percent households, women are educated. This percentage is hundred in two upper classes, more than 85 in the middle strata, more than 53 among small peasants and 30 among landless. Though this may not be treated as the factual position for the village as

Table - 9.1: Female Education in Tikapatti

Peasant Classes	Households in Pure and Composite Groups		
	Total	Educated	% of col. 3 to col. 2
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Landlord	3	3	100
Rich Peasant	10	10	100
Middle Peasant	42	36	85.71
Small Peasant	41	22	53.66
Landless	40	12	30
<b>Totals</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>61 percent</b>

a whole, the trends are important. A direct positive correlation between the formal education and economic position of a household could be established. Further trends

could be observed from the IRP table (Annexure 7A). For instance, percentage for educated as well as highly educated households are higher in CG than the PG. Number of highly educated women in PG is 10 out of 40 households falling under landlord, rich and middle peasant categories. Of this only 2 are employed in service sector jobs. In CG, the number of highly educated women is 11, out of 31 households falling under rich, middle, and small peasant categories. Of this 7 are employed in service sector jobs.

The growing number of women with higher education and awareness for jobs necessitated a Women's Teacher's Training College that was established in village in late 80s. One Teacher's Training College already existing before for both men and women was later converted into Men's college.

Education of girls is increasingly becoming a part of upward mobile family strategy. As their sons diversify into business, salaried jobs, professions, educated daughter-in-laws are in demand. They also want their own daughters similarly married. The idea of raising fewer but quality children motivates the reproductive strategy of the younger generation. The 'virtuous circle' of rising female education and demographic transition in middle class is well evidenced in Tikapatti.

The number of educated women among lower castes such as *Gorhi*, *Chamar*, *Dhanuk* and Barber is remarkable compared to their counterparts in a standard north Bihar village. I have two special cases to cite here:

**Case (Spl / 3):** Madhu is a high school educated young woman from *Gorhi* caste. She has married a man from a different caste without dowry. She works at the adult education centre run by the government and also teaches some girls at home.

**Case (Spl / 1, cited in chapter 7 as well):** Meera, a Barber caste young woman, also has high school level education. Like Madhu she also works at the adult education centre and runs coaching classes for poor girls. Meera, however, is different from Madhu in terms of higher level of social consciousness (see below).

Female education up to high school level is free for all in the state run institutions yet only those with a higher level of consciousness for education utilize the opportunity. Girl's education, in the context of free education appears to become more an 'attitudinal'

issue and less an 'affordability' question. This is partly true but, the sheer need of poor households to mobilise girl children for the daily tasks of housework, sibling care and collection work inhibit their education. Thus the 'opportunity cost' for schoolgirls is heavy. Furthermore, free education means just waiving of the school fees. Other costs have to be borne. This further increases the opportunity cost.

While the poor are still faced with the 'affordability' crisis, the female dropout at high school level is increasing over last few years among even those who can afford it. The reason explained by the high school teachers and corroborated by the parents of school going girls is shocking. A section of the powerful rich and middle peasants from the *Yadav* caste still hold feudal values. While, they prohibit girl's education within their own families, their school-going boys are arrogant and mischievous in behaving with their female counterparts in school and outside. The *Kaivarth* caste people from well off families expressed their strong discontent over the social environment becoming contemptuous for grown up girls due to economic advancement and political dominance of the 'uncultured' *Yadav* caste people who frequently project their 'power' in terms of misbehaving with the *Kaivarth* caste 'cultured' girls.

What is the way out? The rich and resourceful of the 'composite group' families usually send their daughters to study at the urban locations, while of the 'pure group' families with no urban base often have to confine their girls to home. For the middle and the lower-middle classes, the urban option is hard to afford. Thus the market, in this situation, inhibits a progressive culture for all, yet opens up broader options for those who can afford and participate. Market is resource-relative.

#### 4. CONSCIOUSNESS AND ARTICULATION

Every conscious being is a political being. This broad concept of politics perceives 'consciousness' as the genesis of politics. The modern practice of politics is aptly interpreted by Geoff Wood (in an informal discussion), who opines that politics is the act of articulating one's own interest in such a way before others so that the latter are convinced that the interest of oneself is the interest of the latter as well. Here 'articulation' is perceived as the genesis of politics. Tikapatti is a conscious as well as articulate society, the latest manifestation of which is strong mobilisation for elevating the administrative status of the Tikapatti *Panchayat* to the level of a Block<sup>5</sup>. The

residents of the village provide the leadership for this campaign, many of whom have been my respondents, such as Ramnarain Toofan, Dr Bhola Prashant, Dr Rajendra Venu and Dinesh Pd Yadav. Two names, Veena Gupta and Jyotsna, both women are new for me. This, at least, indicates that young women are increasingly becoming more public as well as political.

Women exercise their franchise, very often revealing their own preference for the contesting candidates and the parties. The then sitting MLA of Rupauli assembly constituency reported that while in other villages the contestants have to approach male voters for securing female votes, in Tikapatti they have to be cautious about female voters who hardly act as 'invisible' or 'visible' follower to their men folk.

The average consciousness level among women is much higher in Tikapatti, than in an average north Bihar village. The degree and extent of this consciousness is reflected in their personal and impersonal behaviours. I have some cases to demonstrate how they articulate their individual and common class and gender-specific interests within family, community, and within intra-family and inter-community linkages. To begin with, I re-cite here the case of Meera below:

**Case (Spl / 1):** Meera utilises the opportunity of teaching adult women at the adult education centre and young girls, at her home-based coaching centre for discussing house-keeping, health, sanitation, and other such issues with them. She is doing an impressive job of 'empowerment' in her own way. She takes up her traditional *jajmani* (cutting of nails of women) work, though her husband does not like it. She goes to those houses, where, to use her own expression 'some women need market at home, because they cannot go out' (see Chapter 8). Meera teaches poor young girls from all castes but give preference to those girls from her own caste, i.e. Barber.

Meera articulates common class, caste, and gender interests. She strongly asserts her interests and acts decisive. Her insistence to practise *jajmani* is just 'unusual'. She is a spontaneous social worker with diversified personality and presents a model contrast to those rich women of her generation who 'consume' life rather than 'regenerate' it. Meera is a wonderful confluence of traditional and modern. She neither hesitates pursuing her traditional *jajmani* which is now supposed to be an 'inferior' job nor is shaky in fostering modern values.

I need to re-cite here the case of Chano (PG / F24 above), who articulates her gender interest in a very sensitive arena of gender relations. To put her own expressions below:

I did whatever I wanted to do (going for terminating pregnancy and sterilisation). Now, it was not possible to revert, so they (her husband and mother in-law) have to reconcile (Chano).

The vestiges of a strong Gandhian background of formal political organisation and articulation still predominate. This is visible in women's community level involvement at the *Charkha* (spinning) centre and other religious and cultural events. The case of Shivrani Devi, who earns the prestige of being first educated women to take up a teaching job in sixties, must be cited here:

**Case (CG / D9)** Shivarani Devi, a social worker from the Gandhian philosophical stream organises informal educational and cultural programmes, which is attended and participated by all caste / class women. She supervises young women running government sponsored adult education and *anganbad*<sup>6</sup> centres in the village. She also organises skill developing programmes and informal education classes for poor girls deprived of formal schooling and stitching and knitting classes for growing poor girls. These activities encourage collective participation of women and strengthen community feeling among them.

Poor women's capacity to bargain in labour market and to organise against wage discrimination has developed over last decades. I re-cite the Case of Bhawana Devi (PG / C2 cited in Chapter 8) politically the most articulate woman (a CPI activist) in Tikapatti, in this context.

**Bhawana Devi** has worked hard among poor women for making them aware of their class and gender interests, though she herself is a middle peasant. She capably organises and mobilises female workers on issues ranging from lower wage to gender-based wage disparity and from girl's education to family planning i.e. from class to gender dimensions. As stated above (2), after Bhawana Devi initiated organising poor women around these issues, their consciousness transcended the cultural bars and social stigma related to family planning devices.

One of the important indicators of higher consciousness level is the average age of marriage for a girl, which is now raised to 18-23 i.e. above the minimum legal age ceiling (18 years) for marriage. Many girls at 18 and above can be found unmarried, pursuing higher education in rich and middle class families.

The number of families with inter-caste marriage is also remarkable. The taboos against widow-remarriage do not exist across all castes. Economically self-reliant daughters can afford freedom for decision making in choosing their spouse or their own way of life. I have at least two strong cases of Kumkum and Madhu to demonstrate this fact. These cases are fittest to be cited in chapter 10 (below).

Conflict between older and younger generations and between genders is also obvious. The means and modes of demonstrating their interests are class, caste, and gender-relative. Better access to education, entrance to labour market, participation in business and trade, independent earning, responsiveness to family planning and birth control, entrance into different kind of share-cropping arrangements at their own - all these have contributed to their spontaneous empowerment.

The younger generation of married women now protest against their mother in-laws on the issue of control over their reproductive regime. They win their husband's support in articulating against their in-laws on this issue. The incidence of abortion and sterilisation against the will of the mother in-laws or sometimes, even without letting them know, is on the increase even in lower class families where young women are most constrained by both class and gender.

The consciousness level is higher among poor women. The middle and rich women are more constrained. While, poor women are more straightforward in articulating their interests inside and outside home, middle and rich women usually have to be diplomatic (in articulating their interests) inside home, and shrewd enough in outside arena. Their level of articulation is more of individual nature.

## **5. MARKET IN MARRIAGE THROUGH DOWRY SYSTEM**

Penetration of market in marriage through the medium of dowry is encouraged in the rich families, which grew prosper since 1970s. Dowry, to them, is one of many status symbols. The trickling down effect of this 'market' in marriage compels middle and lower middle classes to sell their landed property to meet the growing dowry demands. Dowry demands have reduced some of the rich peasant families to the middle peasant status (CG / D5), while some middle peasant families are reduced to poor peasant status (PG / F5). Yet, the other face of the dowry system is its value as 'investment' for

strengthening the social and political resource profile of both families involved in the marriage. Two cases cited below demonstrate how dowry demands acted adverse in reducing the peasant's their class statuses:

**K.D. Mandal (CG / D5)** had to sell off 16 *bigha* land for marrying off his seven daughters in 1980s. He later decided to sell off the remaining land (4 *bigha*) and invest the money in business. This helped him substantially improve his deteriorated economic condition, which improved over last decade.

And,

**Narain Mandal (PG / F5)** had to sell off 13 *bigha* of land to pay dowry for marrying of his three daughters. A well off middle peasant with 15 *bigha* of land two decades ago, he is now reduced to a petty farmer with only 2 *bigha*. He is running a tea-stall for additional income and his son is migrated to Punjab.

Reasoning for and arguments in favour of dowry are many and vary class-wise. For upper-middle and middle class families, argument for taking dowry put forth may be: it is as a kind of 'return' drawn in lieu of 'investment', which the groom's parents do in education and career making project (of their son). The bride's parents have to comply with this aberrant argument, if their daughter is 'homely', that means non-working and therefore, non-earning partner, in marriage. The combating trend is that the same argument for an educated working girl is now put forth by her parents for not paying dowry. Kulanand Mandal (PG / B4), who is looking for a suitable match for her 'divorced' daughter, argues similar. His daughter Kumkum had married a man of her own choice. This marriage did not work (chapter 10).

For the lower-middle and middle class families the give and take system of dowry helps in maintaining their economic balance. This balance is tilted against those who reject dowry on cultural and moral grounds for their son, but forced to pay for their daughters. It is rare to get a high profile match without dowry. Some rich families in Tikapatti, for instance Suresh Kesari, Naresh Chandra Kesari, and Chandradeo Mandal, have paid Rs 200,000, Rs 100,000 and Rs 250,000 respectively as cash that excludes other expensive consumer items constituting the complete dowry package.

The control over dowry in cash and kind terms is now shifting to husbands, which were earlier, a privilege to their parents. With the growing feuds in rich families over resource access and disintegration of joint families, collective control over family resources is increasingly shifting to individual control, normally by the husbands and their wives. This

means women's stake in control over dowry is increasing. By women, here I mean those women for whom dowry has been paid by their parents.

The parents of a 'non-earning' girl prefer to 'secure' her future forever through 'investing' (in dowry) once in a lifetime. Those who cannot afford education for girls above school level prefer to marry them off earlier due to mounting dowry pressure. The financial security aspect in marriage is most important for parents of a daughter. In case of a female-headed household, this aspect becomes even more important. I have cited (in chapter 8: 5.2) the cases of two female-headed households, one of Tarini (PG / G20), a poor woman struggling for getting a 'secured' match for her daughter, and Madhuri (PG / C11), a rich woman taking a very cautious approach with readiness to pay substantial amount of dowry. Dowry is becoming caste and class pervasive.

With this much of security consciousness and enough expenses borne by a bride's parents over dowry, cases of desertion are also found. The case of Usha is revealing in this context:

Usha (26), daughter of Narain Mandal (PG / F5 cited above), (now reduced to a poor farmer) is deserted by her in-laws because of unmet dowry demands. Narain is struggling for his daughter on two counts: one, instead of trying a rapprochement with the dowry-hungry family, he is looking for another match for Usha; and second, he is trying her make economically self-sufficient (see Chapter 10 as well).

Such situations have a liberating impact not only on the 'sufferer' women themselves but also on their parents. They appear to be now more inclined towards their daughter's economic self-sufficiency, for instance, Narain Mandal gives first preference to her daughter's economic self-sufficiency, though looking a match for her as well. This conveys powerful message to those parents, especially female-headed households, with unmarried daughters. It is relevant to cite Madhuri, who is looking for a suitable match for her daughter:

**Case (PG C11)** Madhuri feels that female education is increasingly become essential for 'security' reasons because, 'things have changed over years and girl's future cannot be 'secured' now even after marriage. Education protects them like a 'shield' in crisis as this enables them survive at their own.' Her opinion over receiving and giving are revealing. She says, 'receiving dowry is up to me and I reject it, but giving may become a compulsion as a good match is hardly available without paying handsome dowry'.



The summary of an interview taken from her is relevant to present here as the opinion put forth by the respondent is very reflective.

Q1. Why don't you give liberty to your daughter for a self-arranged marriage?

Ans. "No. I cannot allow this because though I may appear 'conservative', yet I am a caring mother. This is even more important in absence of her father. Self-arranged marriage, 'rarely proves to be a successful venture securing girl's life and future. A girl in her teen or early twenties is not mature enough to choose a right person... see, for example Kumkum ...a few other girls from rich families as well ...their self-arranged marriages proved to be a failure."

Q2. Would you prefer marriage to education?

Ans. "Marriage will certainly be preferred if a suitable match is obtained, because further studies for my daughter is not possible without keeping her in Purnea or Katihar in a private accommodation. Boarding facilities are not dependable and secure for girls in either places."

Q3. What makes a man qualify as a 'suitable match'?

Ans. "A suitably employed man in good job with good family background. A family that could care for 'my daughter's aspirations; enabling her studies to continue and further taking up job, if she likes.' My husband was an enlightened man. He taught me after marriage. I had my learning more from his ideas than from the books. If he were alive, my daughter would have gone to a boarding for higher studies. His untimely death has affected my daughter's educational aspirations; therefore, I want an enlightened family for her to marry in. Social values, moral sense all is continuously degenerating each passing day, therefore, I'm cautious in making a judgment on this issue. I would prefer a delay in her marriage rather than making a wrong choice in a hurried decision."

This security conscious mother deeply feels the untimely 'absence' of her husband in her life in special context to her daughter's education and marriage. Madhuri's case is not a standard case, given her better economic resource profile and better mental construct and enlightened views, but the 'security' is becoming more focalized and 'insecure' condition of women even after a 'perceivably' secure marriage is generally inclining middle class parents, in particular, to make their daughters economically self-sufficient. And, education is perceived as the prime route to economic self-sufficiency. Role of education and employment as 'shield' for women in need is well accepted. This shatters the traditional belief that marriage is the final thing in a woman's life!

## 6. MARKETS, SEXUAL LIBERTY, AND SEXPLOITATION

The emergence of female-headed households as a function of outmigration has diverse impacts on the reproductive regime as well. One implication of this situation is loosening of the patriarchal control over reproductive regime of women creating passage for some 'opportunity' for extra-marital sexual behaviour among poor women from nuclear families. Cases of extra-marital sexual intimacy, however, are not confined to lower class / caste alone and extends to middle and upper class / caste as well. The midwife Lakho Devi, who claimed to know 'all such clandestine affairs', reported this. Meena Das, the FHW also reported that upper and middle class women approach Purnea town to get rid of unwanted pregnancies. Lakho Devi reported that unwanted pregnancies were most common among poor women whose men were long-term migrants. Sexual abuse of these socially, materially and emotionally vulnerable women is the other face of the situation. 'The rich *kisan* (peasants) of Lanka *Tola* try to take liberty with the poor labouring women' - Bhawana Devi spoke in personal communication and continued that, 'women do not go for work in Banana fields as they feel apprehensive of being sexually abused.' Her comment is confined to Lanka *Tola*. Sexploitation is not apparent, yet its hidden existence may not be ruled out. Extra-marital sexual relations in clandestine form also cannot be ruled out in a society with a high incidence of outmigration is across all classes. With the above position, the fact remains that poor women, whose men have migrated, are left with no option but to work for their survival and their employers, usually the rich farmers, may often exploit their vulnerability. What could be the impact if such 'clandestine' sexual behaviour is exposed before the migrant male, when he returns periodically? Sometimes, it may lead to desertion of the woman concerned, sometimes, women are able to exert and counter their husbands as how can they claim to remain 'honest' in their sexual behaviour staying away from home. Yet in some other cases, this is not made an issue among poor people from lower castes. In poor families from *Kaivarth* caste groups, it is often unmarried young boys who migrate.

## 7. MARKETS AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

It is economics that reigns, it is politics that rules, culture, society, ecology - all that expands human being are at fringe ... men are becoming more and more hypocritical and political in narrow sense... nobody is non-political in this village yet no one wants to be identified as political because their politics is now reduced to just power brokery for serving their personal interests.

The above statement is not a citation from a text. Sakhi Chand Saw, the retired high school principal, Tarini Pd Nirjhar, the old historian and poet who has written the history of Purnea, Ramnarain Toofan and his wife Shivrani Devi, both of them committed Gandhian activists, the 60-70s age group conclude as above. The context is overall degenerating socio-cultural environment.

Tikapatti has long remained a cultural theatre of the area. Some cultural organisations were active until late 80s. But cultural activities are fast dwindling since the late 1980s - Bhola Prashant, one of the leading cultural activists and poet reported. Sakhi Chand Sao, reported that in the mid-80s he launched a youth organisation. The objective was to raise social consciousness among people to accommodate with the changing social and cultural environment. This worked successfully for some years to come, but some influential people later protested against this endeavour accusing him of politicising the youth and weaning them away from income-generating activities. The protest was strong enough to liquidate the organisation and youth from resourceful families were diverted to banana farming, contract work and other income-generating economic activities.

Bhola Prashant also agrees that people now take more interest in 'making money rather than preserving and developing a more humanizing culture'. Expressing his serious concern over the depreciating cultural environment during last decades, Prashant locates a negative correlation between market and humane culture and argues how it proves to be a deterrent to women liberation. While career consciousness among girls in rich and middle class families is increasing, their development as a complete human being is thwarted. Some of them succeed in becoming economically self-reliant yet they rarely protest against anti-women dehumanising practices like dowry even in their own case, or suppression and subjugation of women in their own families. He pointed out the case of Kumkum, who while enjoying all liberty herself is hardly gender-sensitive to her sister in-law Sulekha (Chapter 10).

*Kaivarth* caste people are culturally sophisticated. These cultural traits further developed through their prolonged interaction with the Gandhian culture. Prashant reported that a section of Yadav caste people have begun disturbing cultural performances in which *Kaivarth* women and girls participated. Though Yadavas are not a new social group in this village they never did it before. What has changed over last

decades? It is their growing political and economic influence in village society. Its genesis lies in blatant *Yadavization* and *criminalization* of politics in 1990s with their caste fellow having ascended to the position of chief minister of the state. *Yadav* caste culture views women's exposure to art and cultural activities as 'unprestigious'. Therefore, they restrict their women from such exposure. This caste has basic traits of a farmer and trader and *Yadav* women have been traditionally exposed to both informal and formal markets, which make them good traders. How the market led affluence infuses political arrogance and throttles a progressive cultural atmosphere can well be demonstrated through the fact that the traditional practice of cultural performance is now stopped in Tikapatti, because *Kaivarth* women had to withdraw.

We have already stated above (2) that female dropout at high school level is increasing over last few years among well off peasant families, precisely for the same reason. The question is why don't *Kaivarth* people resist this cultural assault precipitated by a handful of ruffians? Prashant has a convincing answer. The growing importance of money and career consciousness basically aimed at making a place in the urban sector job market has become priority.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The markets confer differential impacts over the reproductive regime of women divided along the classes. Yet it has one uniting aspect for them. The market 'precipitates' crisis for women to an extent that compels them re-emerge from the traditional roles. This precipitation of crisis and re-emerging of women has demonstrative effect for men as well. The market transforms culture in a way that constricts girls in less resourceful families yet it opens up 'urban' opportunities for girls in rich families. It aggravates survival conditions yet opens up new challenging opportunities for survival through migration. Hard survival conditions make poor women deeper recognise their physical and economic capacities for carrying unwanted pregnancies and they react to this situation via going for termination of pregnancies against the will of their husbands and mother-in-laws. Transformed into the *de facto* head of the families in 'absence' of their men, they are discharging bigger and heavier responsibilities than before. This situation strengthens them counter their migrant husbands on the issue of infidelity. To make it even clearer, market has penetrated in marriage through the medium of dowry. Dowry fails to 'secure' a bride's future in marriage. This situation makes the parents recognise

that economic self-sufficiency is the most reliable route to 'security' for girls. It is a 'shield' against all odds. This whole situation is leading towards a further recognition that though marriage is essential yet not the single option for women. These impacts though complex and class differential change the whole perspective of a woman's life. This changes the whole perception of the reproductive regime, in its holistic form (as I have stated at the outset). This leads to change in whole set of traditional forms of gender relations. This can be further substantiated through the new gender-relational constructs having emerged in Tikapatti during last decades. I attempt to carve out these new constructs in chapter ten below.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **MARKET, PATRIARCHY, CLASS: A FEMININE ROUTE TO LIBERATION**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

I have analysed in chapters eight and nine above as how have women emerged as stronger (than before) actors in both inside and outside spheres of life in productive and reproductive regimes. As how has a 'relaxing' of relations between the genders, in the process of market-infused changes, helped women carving out space for themselves. As how has their greater stake in both the regimes gradually led to a change in their attitude and perceptions of their lives. In this final chapter addressing market as optional route to women liberation, I argue that this overall environment has led to a change in whole set of traditional forms of gender relations and given way to new gender-relational constructs expressed through different forms of households in Tikapatti during last decades.

Women located in these emerging gender-relational constructs expressed through new categories of households are challenging patriarchal values across all classes in their own ways. This has definite implications for men as well. They are found, at occasions, challenging patriarchy and siding with women. This is leading to remarkable attitudinal changes in some of the important spheres of both productive and reproductive regimes. The evidence from Tikapatti speaks much more than what have been my initial key criterias, viz. recognition, assertiveness, and visibility to assess women liberation. The overall changing environment appears to lead towards a more enduring, sustainable, and culturally acceptable 'feminine production system'. I first, attempt to carve out the new gender relational constructs, then to sketch the scenario of gender, class, and patriarchy followed by a brief discussion over main attitudinal changes. This chapter concludes with arguing for a feminine route to women liberation, which is likely to have strong potential to grow as a feminine route to human liberation.

#### **2. NEW GENDER RELATIONAL CONSTRUCTS EMERGING IN HOUSEHOLDS**

A distinction between the concepts of the family and the household needs to be made before I proceed to analysis. While, the former is a sociological category - inclusive,

informal, and expansive, the latter is a more strictly defined and exclusive economic category. This distinction gets diluted in the course of realistic analysis of the field experience, because both the terms household and family are used synonymously in common parlance.

Ooman (2000) argues that family is a persistent site of conflict between individualism and collectivism. In the trajectory of transformation the old is not totally displaced by the new. The old and the new conflict, yet they co-exist in several spheres of life (Srinivas, 1993). The contemporary family as a social system is not only capable of immense cooperation and has considerable durability but is also one of the sites of continuous conflicts, contestations, and violence. It depends on the setting, location, forms, shapes of a family including many other personal factors as to which of the two tendencies, i.e. the conflict or the co-existence emerge as stronger.

The solid joint family system is now breaking into a loosely integrated joint family system in Tikapatti, which may be explained in terms of a federal formation within family system creating a site of cooperation and conflicts between the individual rights and obligations and collective rights and obligations. Market mediates, in this process, in the family and intimate arena of relationships.

The other important factor interacting with the gender relations in a household is the rising incidence of nuclear families (NF) at the expense of declining incidence of the joint families (JF) during last decades. The nuclear families are most numerous in middle peasant households, followed by small peasants and labouring households. The rich peasant households have higher incidence of joint families. Nuclearisation of joint families has definite gender implications on the decision-making process.

The evidence from Tikapatti suggests that prevailing decision-making power of women within a family has significantly transformed though it may not appear at the surface. This means women are able to exercise their power and influence within their families in deciding inside affairs. They discuss important affairs related to the reproductive regime such as higher education and marriage of children. The affairs associated with the productive regimes such as sell, mortgage and purchase of property, share cropping arrangements and rental provisions for farming activities are discussed with them. Women, in rich and middle class families own property, involved in constructing property, for instance houses and take decisions about it. The emerging feminine regime in food sector has made them more decisive. Yet their decision-making power is difficult to comprehend in strict sense of inside-outside

dichotomy. A formal-informal division of work and decision-making capacities better explain the emerging feminine regime of decision-making power. Women's capability to act diplomatic and 'invisible' in influencing the decision-making process is "just amazing" in Indian social context and Tikapatti is no exception to this.

Besides this general trend, it is further amazing to observe women in domineering position in many households in presence of men. In case of men being 'absent' for any reason women spontaneously become the *de facto* head of the household in nuclear families. Men often have to recognise their decision-making capabilities.

My analysis of the findings leads altogether four realistic categories of households to emerge in Tikapatti. The structure of these households evolves round Gender Relation Types (GRTs henceforth) forming the basis for creating decision-making space (for women) and emerging as the key criterion for this classification. The main concern of these households is not with the structure *per se*, but with the kind of relationship between the genders prevailing in a household.

## **2.1 Female Supported and Influenced Households**

This describes the category, where the man is the main provider, controller of the resources, and the final decision-maker in the family. Women support men and facilitate the household economy in income-generating activities besides taking up their traditional responsibilities. This is the most common form of household where men overpower women's stake. Women, however, do not act as a 'passive' partner even in this category. The dominant form of their intervention into the decision-making arena of power is their strategy to act from behind the scene and to influence the overall decision-making process carried on by men. The gender relations in such families are predominantly of a traditional nature that allows restricted communication between the genders in productive regime and moderate communication in reproductive regime. Man, in such families though appear to be the main actor on the surface, his decisions and acts are influenced by women acting from behind the scene. The degree and quantum of their influence may be subjected to many material and immaterial factors. This can be substantiated through the case below:

**Case (PG / D1):** Kausalya (39), wife of Brahmadeo Mandal not only owns 1 *biga* land gifted to her by her father, but also allows her father to stay with her family after her mother's death. This is not unconventional as the family system in India still accommodates old parents and relatives. Yet it is unusual and possible only if the married daughter's position is strong in her family.



Kausalya's position becomes stronger vis-à-vis her husband, because her father can afford a money contribution for his sustenance.

Along with the cultural norm of 'invisibility' which tempts women to act from behind the scene, other factors making them more influential may be her superior natal-home background, educational status, exposure to the outside world, i.e. any distinction that puts her above the status of her in-law's family. If she is more 'attractive' (than the normal), this may be the most powerful thing to keep her husband 'invisibly' under her control. All these 'invisible' hands often act decisive in the disintegration of a joint family into nuclear families. With the growing feeling of individualism within joint families, nuclear families are appearing and women's role as a catalyst cannot be overlooked (Case below).

**Case ( PG / C1):** Rita (32), the wife of Arun K Mandal, a middle peasant, acted as a catalyst in breaking off from the joint family a couple of years ago. Mainly confined to domestic work and status raising hobbies, she was not ready to compromise with her liberty to lead her life as per her own wishes. Having been the youngest woman in the family she had to face some constraints. While Arun wanted to remain united, Rita acted from behind the scene for a division. Though Arun still shares a tractor with his brother, they are parted into two nuclear families.

## 2.2 Female Managed Households

This describes the category where a woman takes up entire household management and the man is reduced to income-generator, staying away from the base. Here the male visits the family at frequent intervals and the female stays at home. The decision making process is found to be more democratised in this set up though immediate decisions are made by women due to temporary absence of men. It is those families where men are usually employed in non-farm sector. Though gender relation types may vary in this group yet the democratic nature of relations between the genders predominates this category. The case below is cited to explain this category:

**Case (CG / B1):** Bachhi Kesari (43), wife of Naresh Kesari lives in the village with four children. Kesari is working as Overseer in Bhagalpur. This family has a very good material and social resource profile. Their first daughter is married in the same village. First son (24) failed in pursuing education beyond school level, therefore, he is engaged in farming under his mother's supervision. This family owns 12 *bigha* and has leased-in another 12 *bigha*, thus cultivating altogether 24 *bigha* of land. Bacchi pays frequent visits to Bhagalpur, controls the income from farming though her son is 24, and manages all the family affairs including income and expenses. This couple wanted their son to become a qualified engineer, which he failed to do. Bachhi consoled her shocked husband and decided her son to be trained as a skilled farmer. She began managing the hired labour, servants, inputs and outputs, keeping her son under constant supervision. Her husband's brother in this process

supported her. Now her son is a skilled farmer, yet she still keeps supervision over him.

In this family, the man's exclusive affair is his job and earning, while the woman manages all the family activities including farming. Until her son is married his separate entity as a family unit seeking a fair part of income is not recognised.

### 2.3 Female Dominated Households

This describes the category where a woman dominates in controlling the household resources and decision-making. Woman in such households may or may not be the main provider. She may or may not be 'essentially' engaged in income-generating activity. Woman dominates yet does not act arbitrary without consulting her man. There may be many families where woman dominates, while the man is present. Decisions are made mutually yet woman's wish prevails. The husband is informed and has token authority, yet the wife is the real decision-maker. Where the husband is the 'earner' and wife is the 'disposer'. How can I define such families 'controlled' by women and provided by men? The term 'female dominated' appears to be the most appropriate. I have two wonderful cases of female dominated households to cite below:

**Case (CG / E4)** Dulari (50) wife of Dasarath Chaudhary controls the income pool as well as the expense outlets of her 14 member joint family. Of this 8 are adult male and engaged in different economic activities. This family has a small betel shop that is the main source of income. Sharecropping, *Bidi*-making, casual farm and construction labour are the additional sources of income. It is interesting that while all male members are busy in diverse earning pursuits the overall command, including financial, of the household rests with the oldest lady, i.e. Dulari. One reason appears to be her husband's greater involvement in religious and cultural activities and least concern with the household affairs. Domestic and other inside work in this family is done by her two young daughters in-law. Dulari takes care of her grandchildren. Her youngest son Mahesh is unmarried and migrated to Punjab to work as a security guard. He remits Rs 400 per month to her mother, who skillfully manages his money in view of his future prospects. Her daughters in-law enjoy conventional rights over their husband's income yet Dulari's command reign supreme without disrupting harmony in family.

And

**Case (PG/ C2)** Bhawana Devi (42), the second wife of Anuplal Mandal has been cited before in other contexts. Here I refer to her position as a woman dominating not only her own family with 6 members, but managing the first family of her husband as well. She has helped the adult son of her husband (from first marriage) in doing a business for his sustenance. She is herself an enterprising peasant managing food as well as cash crops. While her capabilities are multi-faceted, one additional factor that contributes to her dominant position in family is the long (15-16 yrs) age-gap between her and

her husband. Her children are young and her sense of security for their future motivates her to work hard. Man is neither 'inactive' nor 'absent' in this family.

Both of these households are female dominated in spite of dominant number of male members. While, the case of Dulari demonstrates that women's involvement in income generation may not be a precondition for a female to dominate, the case of Bhawana suggests that woman's economic strength combined with her capability to assert in relation to her man could be most liberating.

## **2.4 Female Headed Household**

The concept of Female Headed Household implies that the household is a unit usually headed by a male. The established notion about the 'headship' in a family context essentially accepts the male as the head of the family - the most visible kind of patriarchy within a family structure. I contest this established notion. The concept of a male-headed household is valid only in case of absence of a woman in the family. Similarly, the concept of the female-headed household is valid only in case of absence of a man in a family. In between these two extremes the common households may be female supported and influenced, female managed, and female dominated as described above. (This, however, may not rule out the possibilities for other forms of households to exist.) In Tikapatti, there are some households, where the woman (though not necessarily the direct income-generator) becomes the main decision-maker and controller of the household due to frequent absence and / or passive position of male for any reason.

A wonderful case of a resourceful 'female headed' household is cited below. It is interesting to note that this household was headed by woman in the *de facto* sense of the term in man's lifetime as well. I have referred to Madhuri in other contexts in chapters 8 and 9 above.

**Case (PG / C11)** Madhuri, now a widow in her late fifties has been *de facto* head of her rich peasant family even during her husband's lifetime because he was a school teacher and politician. These assignments hardly enabled him look after farming and money management. She has two grown up children, Santosh (son) and Sunita (daughter). Madhuri takes decisions and exercises her control over household affairs, money, land property management, and other family resources. Her son supports her in outside work and her daughter in household work. Her husband died a few years ago. By then Santosh had completed his studies and decided to take up farming instead of waiting endless for a white-collar job. He supervises and manages food and banana farming. He has invested in business as well. Madhuri controls the total income pool from different sources and her decisions are final over where, what, and how to spend. 'My children have access to money and other resources yet they never use it without my consent - She informs.'

Madhuri shatters the myth of 'weakness' attached with a female-headed household. While her strong resource profile appears to be the dominant reason for strength, her case speaks much more than this. While her enlightened opinion over female education, dowry, modes of marriage, farming is revealing (cited in chapter 8), the 'emotional loss' felt for her husband's untimely death speaks much more than her speech. Unlike traditional mothers she wants a technically educated daughter in-law for her postgraduate son. If a qualified doctor, engineer, or lawyer girl is not possible to get, she wants her to be intelligent enough so that she could facilitate her to take up technical courses like medical, engineering, law. 'Woman are in no way 'inferior' to men, I have learnt this from my husband' - she says.

In contrast to these 'strong' scenarios for female-headed households, there have been a number of attempts to establish the systems of classification and developing different criterions for a family to 'qualify' as female headed in the Indian sub-continent context (Islam, 1991; Kumari, 1989; Agarwal, 1986; Bardhan, 1989). Bardhan, Agarwal, Kumari and Islam - all held that female-headed households are usually more prone to poverty. Some cases described below conform to this broad generalisation:

**Mania Devi (PG / G17)**, a widow has to work very hard to provide for her 5-member family, which includes her widow daughter with a child. She is supported by her migrant son who remits some money. **Batahia Devi (PG / G2)**, another widow has to provide for her 6-member family with no migrant male member to remit. **Potasia Devi (CG / F7)** yet another widow with her 7-member family is facing even worse as she is deprived of the actual possession over the land distributed in her favour under the land reform schemes. Both of them are casual labourers without an adult male member to support.

The poor female households are heavily dependent on child labour, the extent of which further depends on demand (factor) for labour in household economy and supply (factor) of the pressure of poverty pushing children out in labour market.

The processes through which households become 'female headed' also interact with resource profile of a family. These processes are: divorce, widowhood, outmigration, disablement, and the choice of not marrying. For instance, if the process is death or desertion, her resource base such as her access to legal services, age, and health and status influences a woman's chance for remarriage. Kumkum (a rich divorcee) and Usha (a poor deserted) are good cases to demonstrate this fact.

The extra-economic costs borne by a female-headed household cannot be assessed in economic terms. The emotional loss is felt more deeply by poor women deprived of material resources yet emotion knows no bars. For instance, Madhuri (above) and Tarini (below) both located at diametrically opposite ends on a class dimension are placed in identical positions on a gender dimension.

" ...my husband was a landless labourer and share-cropper, therefore, his death did not cause me economic crisis as we were working together and I knew how to survive.... my son now replacing his father has began earning ....we are no way economically worse off than before, i.e. during my husband's life-time. We have compensated material loss...yet what can never be compensated is his 'absence' in my life...this emotional loss... nothing could compensate this... this is my greatest loss ...! (Tarini, in personal communication to me) ".

For a poor widow, such as Tarini, life becomes more difficult and agonising under double pressures of poor resource access and deep emotional deprivation, while for a rich widow like Madhuri (above) material resources do not suffice. The 'economics of poverty', in analysing the extra-economic realm of gender relations suffers from the 'poverty of economics' syndrome.

Female headed household (FHH henceforth) is not a new phenomenon, yet the route by which a family turns into a *de facto* FHH deserves attention in the face of sharp increase in the number of FHHs since 1970s and on in Tikapatti. This new formation is predominantly a function of large-scale male migration to rural and urban labour markets. Thus, I have FHHs, as a distinct category under the purview of this study, emerging out of the double pressures of local and distant labour markets. These FHHs may be facing constraints from family and societal patriarchy, at the one end, yet obtaining other kinds of liberation facilitated through some other factors. The effects of the markets are heavily mediated by other intervening factors. The cases of Dhamania and Tarini (below) substantiate this observation.

Dhamania has to live at the mercy of her in-laws and husband's brothers because, in absence of her husband who is migrated to Punjab. Her in-laws access the remittance that her husband sends for her. She has to work hard inside the household in a joint family set up. And, out in the local labour market as well for her survival.

Tarini (cited above) has severed all the ties from her 'controlling' relatives after her husband's death. She relied on her earning and on her migrant son, who remits regularly for the family.

The family patriarchy, in both the cases, heavily constrains the effects of market. Yet Tarini succeeds in liberating herself (from family patriarchy) while Dhamania is not able to do so. Two factors, age and marital status appear to mediate here. Dhamania is young and apprehends a 'desertion' if she crosses the boundary of the home. Tarini is mature and widowed, with two grown up offspring; therefore, she can afford to challenge the family patriarchy.

A household with access to migration opportunities can pursue a strategy of female-headedness in order to become upwardly mobile (e.g. Kanti, CG / D13 and Chhavi Kesari, CG / B2). The situation of frequent absence, in any case, transforms men's position in family as a dynamic factor, the essential disqualification of which becomes his unreliable presence in farming and or other associated economic activities at home. The household in such a situation spontaneously become firstly, female-managed and subsequently, female-dominated. The absence of men provides opportunity as well as assigns responsibility over women.

The wider structural context, in which a FHH is located, also determines internal as well as external relationships of a households and may, in the end, become more important than presence or absence of certain members. For instance, a widow landless FHH is likely to experience more vulnerability and growing impoverishment (e.g. Kirti Devi) while a relatively wealthy female household with a migrant husband engaged in a salaried job that enables him to remit regular and fair amount of money may experience upward social and economic mobility (e.g. Bacchi Devi).

The market does not take into account the real costs to society through environmental degradation and fails in dealing with other kind of social deprivations (Sen, 1981, 1992). Extending this argument to the arena of emotional deprivation which market fails to deal with, the socially miserable and emotionally vulnerable condition of poor women suffering in a *de facto* FHH in prolonged absence of their outmigrant men cannot be ignored. The opposite face of the coin is sufferings of the outmigrant men who become homeless miles away from their family. Market through outmigration creates a situation that may be aptly characterized as '...practical absence of the family among proletarians..... (Marx, 1977: 123)".

The concept of 'family' in Indian society, essentially accepts the integrated existence of both man and woman both. Therefore, absence of either partner for whatsoever reasons practically means the breaking down of this cohesive unit, i.e. family. A

marked shift of approach from the modern concept of single parent family may be understood in this context. Man and woman come together through marriage alliance not only because of their complementarity in biological reproduction alone but also in social reproduction and for other kinds of mutual requirements. After they form a household / family they behave like a single entity. They work jointly for the welfare of the family. Their mutual interdependence constitutes a bond between them. This mutual interdependence cannot be revealed and tested by standardised measuring rods and cannot be compartmentalised. It is difficult to assess who rules over whom in what way in this most intimate arena of human relationships, '...so extended in time, so intensive in contact, so dense in their interweaving of economics, emotion, power and resistance' (Connell, 1987 underscore mine).'

### 3. MARKET, PATRIARCHY, CLASS

An exploration into the liberating potential of market opportunities within twin conceptual framework of gender and class is the final part of this exploratory account of Tikapatti. How does market in the process of its complex interaction and encounter with patriarchy and class enable women to create a passage for liberation? Patriarchy alone cannot explain all aspects of female poverty, deprivation, and oppression. The constraints and the opportunities conferred by the markets are differentiated, by class and to some extent, by caste. These have gender-differentiated effects as well. Women's lack of access to education, skills, production, inputs, credit, jobs, and social services arises from adverse class and weaker resource positions. In a caste-class stratified hierarchic society the relative effects of 'family patriarchy', 'societal patriarchy' and 'state patriarchy' vary across the classes. Tikapatti, in spite of having a relaxed caste and moderate class structure, is no exception to this general position. For those disadvantaged in class position, societal and state patriarchies work more powerful than the family patriarchy. And, for those advantaged, it is the family patriarchy that rules decisive. This may be illustrated through cases cited below:

**Case (PG / B4):** The family patriarchy rules in case of Sulekha, the daughter in-law of Kulanand Mandal. She is educated yet not allowed higher studies nor taking up job by her in-laws as they have enough material resources to maintain her, therefore, she does not need to earn money. More than this they feel that given the opportunity Sulekha will supersede her husband, i.e. their son's educational status.

Family patriarchal values vary by women's position within a family. While for a daughter in-law (e.g. Sulekha), it constrains liberation, for a daughter (e.g. Kumkum) of the same family the family patriarchy is relaxed. She is allowed to opt for a job in Police department (unconventional work for a woman). Her freedom to marry a man

of her own choice as well as to divorce him later is accepted. While family patriarchy is relaxed here, 'societal patriarchy' nevertheless operates in a 'passive' manner. Kumkum is being cited as a 'stigma' and she earns bad name for her liberated life-style in the society. Yet the powerful position of her family prevents societal patriarchy to act. The class position inhibits societal patriarchy.

Family patriarchy worked powerful in case of a poor widow Tarini as well. Her relatives, after her husband's death, initially took control of her family because regular flow of money was expected from her son Pujo who had migrated to Punjab. Tarini got liberated successfully resisting the family patriarchy and severing all the ties from her relatives (below). Along with the family patriarchy poor women have to suffer from societal and state patriarchal domination as well. How state and societal patriarchies work adverse for Kirti, a poor widow is apparent from her detail case-profile below:

**Case (Spl / 4):** Kirti (34), a widow, with two children under 14, has to struggle hard for a survival after her husband died a couple of years ago. The local Bank forfeited her buffalo, the main source of their survival within a few months of her husband's death. Her husband had bought three buffaloes for which he obtained loan worth Rs 5,000 under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (a government sponsored scheme for poor) from the Bank. The Branch Manager of the same Bank who promised to credit the money in the debtor's account against the loan later bought one of these three buffaloes. The debtor for repaying the loan sold of another buffalo. The family was now able to retain just one buffalo. Kirti was earning Rs 300 per month by selling milk. After her husband died the Bank forfeited this buffalo.

During her husband's lifetime, Kirti was confined to buffalo raising work for milk production and selling. As the buffalo got forfeited she was left with no option but to restore her husband's work of contractual tenancy. There too, she had to pay an increased rate of rent, i.e. Rs 551 instead of Rs 500 per annum per *bigha* paid by her husband. This radical shift of work regime posed further challenges, for instance, the raised cost of inputs and in all this she has to face the competitive market with a vulnerable bargaining position. Kirti, now works land with the help of her son and does casual labour for supplementary income. She has to deal with the factor market and manage ploughing, sowing, planting and harvesting - all on her own. Her daughter is compelled to become an adult before time, as she assists her mother in domestic work.

### 3.1 Market Challenging Patriarchy

Market opportunities can challenge and weaken patriarchy. Independent economic status acquired through both upper and lower tier labour markets strengthen women to fight back patriarchal dominations, though the cases from Tikapatti, pointing to this fact speak much more than this.



**Case (PG / B4):** Kumkum (30) is working as a typist in Police department staying away all alone in Pune. Having married a man of her choice in another caste and later divorced, Kumkum is not hesitant about her second marriage, but with a 'suitable' match. She feels that her first choice was wrong as her ex-husband wanted to control her income and paternal property. He was not interested in self-earning. As she was not ready to be 'exploited' by him, she opted for a divorce. But, 'I cannot go into a marital relation again at the expense of my personal freedom', Kumkum says.

The economic self-sufficiency and patriarchal dominance experienced in first marriage has strengthened Kumkum's opt for a life of her own choice and she is not ready to 'compromise' with her liberation. A 'suitable' match for her is obviously a difficult choice.

**Case (Spl / 3):** Madhu (32) married in a neighbouring village is working as a nurse since 1987 in Kishanganj. She was married in 1989 to an adult education supervisor. She stays alone at her work place as she usually did before marriage. She was independent and controlling her income before marriage and she is still enjoying her economic liberty. Her husband and in-laws never claim her earnings. Her husband is working 12 kilometres away from her work place and pays frequent visits to her place of stay. This is how their conjugal life is managed.

Madhu is even one step ahead in a different way. She has managed her conjugal life in tune with her economic liberation. This is just reverse to what usually happens in a patriarchal set up. Women's life is determined by conjugal obligations rather than employment. Retaining complete control over her income is another serious blow to patriarchy.

While Kumkum and Madhu are educated women from rich and middle class families, employed in the regular service sector, the case of Tarini (whom I have referred to before, but in different contexts) is different.

**Tarini (40)** a Yadav caste widow landless sharecropper with two children - a son and a daughter, after sensing that their relatives may exploit her along with her daughter, severed all the ties from them. She took hold of herself and her family, making a hard choice to live separately even in face of acute crisis. Her daughter is grown up and it is hard to manage a secure marriage for her in face of vulnerable economic condition as well as in absence of relational support. Her son, who has migrated to Punjab, remits regular money, which she is saving for her daughter's marriage. Her own income from sharecropping is enough to sustain the two-member family. She is confident that even her son stops supporting her after his marriage she is capable to survive at her own.

The dominant message that these cases convey is that economic self-sufficiency enables women challenge the patriarchy, discover their strength, and redefine their

life perspective. This is realised not only by women themselves but by some men as well. This inclines them too, change their conventional perspectives in the capacities of husbands and fathers. How? This is substantiated through two cases cited below.

**Case (Spl 5):** Niranjani (20), with high school level education is married to an unemployed educated youth Anil in the neighbour village. It was agreed between her father and the in-laws (before marriage) that her studies will not be discontinued after marriage. After marriage, her in-laws tried to confine her to domestic work and exerted pressure to discontinue studies. Anil's position is weak because he is unemployed; therefore he is not able to protest against his family, in favour of his wife. Niranjani was not ready to discontinue her studies; therefore, her in-laws sent her back to her parents, because her husband was also unemployed. After a year, they called her back but this time Anil protested to his parents against her confinement to home and encouraged her for further education and employment staying with her parents. Niranjani works at *Charkha* (spinning wheel) centre and earns Rs 5 a day while preparing for college examination on the private basis. Her husband and parents encourage her for further education and to gain employment.

A husband, in this case, is challenging the patriarchal values in his family in favour of his wife. How do a father challenges for her 'deserted' daughter is evident from the case of Usha below, who is also cite before (chapter 8) in other context.

**Case (PG/ F5):** Usha (26), daughter of Narain Mandal, a poor farmer, is deserted by her in-laws because of unmet dowry demands. Narain, instead of trying a rapprochement with her daughter's in-laws is looking for another match for Usha. But, this is his second agenda. His first agenda is to create some productive asset for her so that even after his death she could survive at her own. He is also trying to make Usha self-sufficient. She also works at *Charkha* centre. Narain strongly feels that her economic sustainability is more important (than a husband) and ' if she is self-sufficient her position will be stronger in marriage, economic sufficiency would protect her against any hardship in future'.

Men, mainly in the capacity of fathers, have started feeling that marriage for their daughters has not remained as safe and secure as it happened to be before due to growing 'money mindedness' (as they express it). Marriage demands 'dowry' and even after disposing of land for meeting dowry a daughter's future may not be secured. So, why to spent on dowry? The same amount needs to be spent on their education and employment – some of them argue. Some other also offers a different set of argument reflecting their preference for daughters over the son. The case below is revealing.

**Case (CG / D1):** Anandi Pd Mandal is a school teacher and his wife Asha, a nurse, both are employed miles away from Tikapatti. Their son is engineering student at Bangalore (more than a thousand mile away). Their daughter is in high school. This couple argue that a daughter remains more caring and sensitive than a son for their parents even after her marriage, while a son usually goes thousands miles away in job pursuits and hardly looks back.

Therefore, old age is more secured with a daughter staying around or at a lesser distance. They further say that daughters, if employed, can better replace sons.

With inheritance rights, education, and employment, the traditional perspective in relation to a daughter that 'she belongs to her in-laws family' and 'parents home is a temporary resort' is changing. This attitudinal change is expressed not only in those families where men and women are educated and employed in off-farm sector but in educated pure peasant families as well. This change also cuts the class bar though the degree may vary.

### **3.2 Gender Solidarity Defeating Patriarchy**

Women can act decisive on gender lines and going against patriarchal values – this can be demonstrated through a strong case cited below. I have to refer this case as anonymous because, the old lady agreed to speak to me on the condition of keeping her story 'confidential'. Though story has to be narrated here, the name is not disclosed.

**Case (Spl / 6):** In a rich peasant female-headed family, the married son developed extra-marital relations with another woman. He temporarily deserted his wife and began staying away from home with his beloved. The widow mother of the man, in this critical situation extended emotional and material support to her daughter in-law and deprived her son of the property and resources he was consuming before as a legal heir. The old lady met her son's beloved to convince about her vulnerable position and advised her either to withdraw or to marry her son, who after second marriage would lose all property claims. She, at the same time, also advised her son either to quit his beloved or to divorce his legal wife and made it explicit that if he opted for the second course he would lose all his claims over the family property, which would be given to his legal wife and children. Her sustained effort with firm determination over property which included withdrawal of financial support to her son finally led the latter as well as his beloved put an end to their relationship.

How property rights vested with the old mother, in this case, helped her in exercising rights and power over her son is apparent. Yet property rights alone may not have worked without her personal strength, courage, and determination, which complemented the property rights. While strong class position facilitates the woman cited above, another woman with a weaker class position is not less courageous:

**Case (CG / E6):** Harni Devi, a poor widow looked after her young daughter in-law and encouraged her to protest her husband (Harni's son) while he was wasting his earnings on drinks and gambling. Harni prevented his son from coming home and staying with the family until he left these bad habits and began sharing his income with his wife and mother. Old women are often supportive and patronising to young women in critical times.

### 3.3 Market Challenging Class And Culture: Outsiding is Superior

The cultural notions attached with the inside-outside work regimes have changed over last decades with the growing inclination among women towards directly remunerative work, at the expense of domestic work across all the classes. The concept and perception of superiority and inferiority associated with the outside and inside work regimes of women across all classes is also changed.

Working on fields now acquires superiority over inside work in courtyard for lower class women. They prefer to work as farm labourer rather to as a housemaid. Post-harvest work is preferred over domestic work and the latter is always taken up as compulsion. This radically changed perception towards domestic work, which acquires 'highest' prestige if done for her own family and becomes un-prestigious, if done for others in lieu of money is new which has positive correlation with the market. This can be explained in terms of growing inclination towards visibility.

The mechanisation of post-harvest work has extended the arena of this hitherto inside work beyond one's own compound. With mechanical devices available in local market, the major part of post-harvest work - predominantly an inside work done by poor-lower-middle-middle class women are now transferred to market. Besides, the location of this market is often in the compound of owners of these machines. The consequences for poor women has been their pushing down to the remaining drudgery of the post-harvest work and dragging out into the fields for a more strenuous job. For the well off sections, this meant releasing of women from post-harvest supervision work (now relegated to poor women working for a remuneration) and engaging them into farm-supervision work. With this distinct 'supervisor' class the meaning and arena of the inside work has further extended.

Prestige attached with outside work in non-farming sector, usually service-sector, now supersedes all kinds of work in middle and upper class families. Its precedence over domestic work is accepted, yet at expense of lower class women and men engaged in paid domestic jobs and older women relegated to 'care taker's' job in a family.

Kabeer (1994) argues that women's 'perceived' contribution is an important factor affecting their bargaining power within a household. This is likely to be related to 'visibility' and extent of 'gainful' work. The invisibility of their work weakens their ability to bargain for higher wages from their employers and for a greater share of household

resources. While affecting of the bargaining power of women with 'visibility' and 'gainful' work within a households is a fact in Tikapatti, I have cited many cases before, for instance, Kanti, Shyama, Chhavi Kesari, Bacchi Devi, (all in upwardly mobile rich and middle class families) and Dulari, Kalawati (in poor families) to demonstrate that women not employed in 'gainful work' are neither less effective in household management and control nor relegated as 'invisible' in their households.

The tendency of gainfully employed women 'visible' in market but getting 'invisible' at home with 'weaker' bargaining position is, instead observed, due to their absence at home, e.g. Sudha (CG / C8), working, as assistant teacher is a case in point. This contrast can be found in joint families, where some women staying at home control inside affairs.

#### **4. CHANGES IN CONVENTIONAL AGE-POWER RELATION**

The conventional concept of age-power relation ascribing the view that women get power, as they grow older appears to be static in nature and fails to explain the dynamic situations. The age-power relational matrix needs to be seen in the context of age-responsibility relationship in Tikapatti. My findings make strong case for the idea that the power flows from responsibility. The rights stand on the edifice of duties. I have two cases that illustrate the changing dimensions of the age-power relations.

**Case ( PG / A3):** This is one of three big landholders joint families. Here Draupadi Devi (60, wife of Upendra Yadav), the landlady is deprived of proper rest during peak season, as she has to supervise farming work done by her two brother in-laws, including some tenants and servants. She often visits fields to see the crops. She has to supervise maids and servants engaged in post-harvest work done in the courtyard as well as in market. The younger women - her two sister in-laws, by contrast, have to do just normal domestic work with the help of housemaids. They consume their leisure in playing cards or watching television or at best to engage in hobbies like embroidery and knitting.

In response to my query that why do they not help their old sister in-law, the young women said that they cook and manage other domestic work which was strenuous even with maids. The response of the old lady to the same query as why does not she take help from her sister in-laws, she said that they do not like these rustic jobs to do. She added that they do not like to cook, because they are educated. But they have to cook because it is hard to get a cook. While, these 'educated' ladies unable to get a job, do not feel any sense of responsibility to this rustic job and believe in sheer consumption they are conscious enough about their right to this 'rustic' property and share of income derived from it, as their husbands are doing all the 'rustic' jobs.

The case of Lakho Devi who is referred in chapter 9 above in different context, also argues against the conventional approach to age-power relation.

**Case (Spl / 7):** Lakho devi; a middle aged widow from a lower caste is a professional midwife. She has been the final decision-maker in her family during her husband's (a peasant) lifetime. She lost control over family with her eldest son and daughter in-law challenging her sway after her husband's death. Now, self-sustaining and surviving at her own, she feels isolated in her family though socially very popular and wanted because of her work.

#### **4.1 Power is not a Zero-sum Game**

Power, in *de facto* sense of the term, does not appear to be a zero-sum game in the context of gender relations within a family, though this static concept is often used to explain gender relations. It is commonly believed that Indian men normally do not want women, especially their wives to work outside home as they view women's active participation in outside work (income-generation, in particular) as intrusion into the men's work regime, the logical extension of which is supposed to be the intrusion into their arena of 'power'. The common feeling that, women's entry to men's domain (female regime being already in their control) would empower them to become more 'authoritative' and tilt the power balance heavily in their favour, persists. It is this 'fear psychosis' that makes them control their wife's income. Patriarchy, thus perceives power as a zero-sum game.

The families of Kanti, Madhuri, Bhawana, Meera, and many others from Tikapatti, however, demolish this established position and argue in favour of a dynamic concept of power, i.e. power may not be a zero-sum game in a family. In those families where for different reasons distribution of power between male and female is tilted in favour of female and / or female is contributing to the family income, it is not only the resource profile position but also the quality of life, in general and children's growth, in particular that is found better than in those so called male dominated and controlled families. This is now increasingly being recognised by men as well.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

How far is this empirical analysis a witness to the Radical-feminist position, WID position, Gender position, Marxist-feminist position, Eco-feminist position or a Feminine Principle position? Does Tikapatti, a historical site of powerful Gandhian model of women (and human) liberation reveal potential for developing a distinct feminist perspective? If yes, where does this model of liberation stand within the Maslowian scheme (Chapter 2) of human liberation?

The analysis is revealing enough to argue that women 'actors' with varying degrees demonstrate their capability to 'assert'. They not only themselves 'recognise' their conspicuous presence but let the men also recognise the same. And, their inclination towards 'visibility' has remarkably increased. This analysis speaks much more beyond recognition, assertiveness, and visibility to explain and illustrate the meaning and nature of women liberation through market option in Tikapatti.

The market opportunities confer differential advantage on women from different classes. It has liberated the rich and resourceful women most. The WID position is pronounced among upwardly mobile middle class women. Both the radical and WID positions find their pronounced expression in same social strata. Therefore, Tikapatti is a bold witness to the radical feminist position with patriarchies facing challenge from both feminine and masculine directions. This site is a vocal witness to the WID position as well, i.e. the 'outsiding' of women across those classes where they usually remained 'insided' before. The opposite face of the coin, i.e. 'insiding' of men, however, is rare to find. To put it simply in the Maslowian scheme, liberation of women representing this social segment aims at the fourth level of hierarchy, i.e. the self-esteem. The liberating potential of the market, thus touches the fourth higher level waiving the three lower levels of 'physiological needs', 'security needs' and 'love needs' (Chapter 2) that represent the basic needs of human life without which the fourth level can not be attained. It is obvious that the rich and middle classes are not deprived of these three hierarchies of human needs.

The market opportunities, however, confer very little advantage to poor. Therefore, potential for liberation from the first two three levels becomes very restricted via markets. In contrast to the normal findings that the market opportunities confer no advantage to poor and women and act adverse for them, my findings suggest that forces of market operate within the institutional set up and market is resource-relative, therefore, confers less advantage to those poor in resources and more to those rich in resources. The role of market forces as a catalyst for change could best be explained in terms of what I would call the 'precipitating of the crisis' and enforcing women emerge out of their vanity and myth of 'weakness'. Market forces create crisis for those who are poor in resource and in turn, offer new opportunities for survival. If farm-supervision and food farming is becoming a female domain, it is 'painful' for women as it increases their responsibilities, yet it is liberating because it offers them act and occupy an important place in the food production system, which they never had before. Similarly, if a depressed labour market at home creates a survival crisis for poor, the outmigration offers a new opportunity. This results in feminisation of the

local labour market and added responsibility of managing their households at their own. This allows more space for manoeuvre to them as well. Painful, yet liberating. True the emotional deprivation is felt deep and non-economic costs are heavy but the basic question of 'survival' becomes the first thing in life. The first ceiling of liberation according to Maslowian scheme is the first condition for the human existence itself. The crisis created by market though resolved through 'escape' (by men) allows women struggle at home. They have to struggle whether they are farm-supervisors located in rich families or poor labourer vulnerably located in female-headed households. Gender unites here, though class divides. Patriarchy is challenged in all classes in varying degree and in multifarious ways.

The Marxist-feminist position finds expression among poor and the poorest, struggling for liberation from the first two levels of Maslowian hierarchy of needs, i.e., the physiological (need for food, cloth and shelter) and safety (a safe and secure social environment to live in) needs. In the struggle process some of them have to lose the third higher level of needs, i.e. the love needs (in case of migrant families). Yet it is a weaker site for the Marxist-feminist position, as class does not always subsume gender, though Tikapatti is a class divided society with a relaxed caste structure. Class-consciousness is diverted towards class cohesion through social networking and 'escape' to distant labour markets. Gender consciousness does not come in sharp conflict with the class-consciousness as both the genders are struggling in their separate arenas (at home and far away in labour markets) in order to survive.

Evidence from Tikapatti most vigorously demonstrates that there is a 'feminine sector of farming' basically aiming at sustenance vis-à-vis a 'masculine sector of farming' basically aiming at profit making. This setting clearly suggests this site as a witness to the Eco-feminist stream, in essence. The feminine farming, feminine regime of work, power and decision-making, all make strong case for a Feminine Principle in shaping and evolving gradually, under the pressure of the market-infused patriarchal mode of development. There exists a conspicuous presence of an 'informal regime' managed and dominated by women vis-à-vis a 'formal regime' dominated and controlled by men. Market opportunities have created this sharp division between the formal and informal and to a fair extent, have mitigated the gap between the traditional dichotomised inside-outside feminine-masculine regimes. This leads to argue strongly in favour of preference to the 'informal-formal' dialectics as a better analytical device over the hitherto persuaded inside-outside dichotomy as the dominant analytical tool to comprehend and analyse gender relations in Indian context. The informal regime, though facing onslaught from the market (-infused development), yet without going



into much direct conflict with the latter, appears to be creating a more enduring, sustainable, and culturally acceptable 'feminine production system'. By the term feminine, here I do not mean just the feminine gender *per se*. This means feminine nature and ways of action, a feminine 'vision'. A feminine vision emerging from a common woman's eyes and a 'common' Indian woman is a poor peasant woman, an agricultural labour woman, and a casual woman worker. A common Indian woman is a nurturer, provider, and pivot of the family. This feminine vision has the potential to become more inclusive. This has the potential to expand and to embrace all poor, resourceless, and deprived women (and men), struggling for creating a more humane survival conditions. This process of feminisation appears to lead to a more humanistic route to liberation and overcoming of alienation between the genders.

## **PART – IV**

### **JAHANABAD: THE MOBILISATION OPTION**

With this Part, I enter the secondary and comparative location of the fieldwork, i.e. Jahanabad district of central Bihar. This part consists of last two chapters.

In Chapter Eleven, I explore as how far has mobilisation acted as a 'catalyst' in liberating women from class and gender constraints and to what extent. I address the central theme of the thesis in the context of mobilisation as the optional route to women liberation. This chapter presents a contrast to the market driven changes in gender relations occurring in Tikapatti. This chapter relates to chapter four as this simultaneously represents the empirical site for central Bihar where the conflicts between the 'productive forces' and 'production relations' (as I argue in Chapter Five) appear to be resolved through sustained mobilisation.

This study finally leads towards a distinct feminist perspective of a greater relevance to Bihar, India and other developing countries. This is Women's Worldview. The final statement is presented in Chapter Twelve (Conclusion).

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### WOMEN LIBERATION: THE STRUGGLE ROUTE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Women's liberation has multifarious meanings, actions, varied forms of subjectivity, and is open to boundless interpretations. This is even more tempting to look into forms of struggle directly aimed at emancipation from the exploitative system as a whole. Here, I explore as how mobilisation has acted as a powerful catalyst in liberating women from class and gender subordination and to what extent. Given the central theme of this study - exploring women liberation - in this chapter, I address struggle as another route to women liberation in the context of Jahanabad district in central Bihar as a comparison to market driven changes in gender relations in Tikapatti in north Bihar. The setting is the strong and sustained process of radical mass mobilisation against the exploitative system as a whole since late seventies in Jahanabad.

Radical mobilisation in Jahanabad (or elsewhere) views women primarily as a 'class', the gender exploitation is seen as embedded in class (and caste) exploitation. Though class based mobilisation around economic issues received prime attention in the radical movement, the question of women's '*izzat*' (dignity) has subsumed economic issues on many occasions. At many occasions, gender issue, i.e. the issue of *izzat* sparked off strong mobilisation, which later culminated into class struggle. The culmination of gender issue into class issue is a unique path that the radical mobilisation has discovered in this spontaneous process. Assigning 'patriarchy' a secondary place in relation to 'class' with a flexible approach to attend 'gender' first, when and wherever needed, is another unique feature of radical mobilisation. This considerably prevents Naxalism from being dubbed as another left persuasion, which allows class to subsume gender.

My analysis is restricted to Naxalite forms of mobilisation, which have been pursued under different CPI-ML organisations active in Jahanabad since late seventies. I have described the emergence, growth, stages, and agenda of the Naxalite movement

(Chapter - 5 ), in general context of central Bihar. In Jahanabad, the movement originated during its second phase. I begin with the setting and subsequently proceed to describe the three successive phases of mobilisation from a women's participation viewpoint.

I argue that mobilisation as a catalyst has radically changed the life conditions of the poor women while; its 'derivative' impacts on rich women have been negative, both as a class and as a gender. Also, the richer women experience, at occasions, class and gender in 'contradiction' with each other. The poor women experience class and gender as more 'continuous'. The key to this continuity is open 'communication' between the genders in course of mobilisation. The mobilisation as an alternative route to women liberation finally leads to argue in favour of emerging contours of a 'women's world view' (WWV) though not significantly visible at this point of time.

## 2. The Setting

The present Jahanabad district was carved out of huge Gaya district in 1986 following a state-perpetrated massacre in Arwal<sup>1</sup>, then a small block of Jahanabad sub-division. The distinct nature, forms and dimensions of radical mobilisation made this district acquire the centre stage of the Naxalite movement since early-eighties and through the nineties. A special feature of Jahanabad is essential to highlight here before I proceed to describe the normal course and phases of mobilisation. This is decades long practice of organised banditry in this area.

The mobilisation began against organised banditry and extractions, through criminal bands maintained by rich landholders from *Bhumihar* and *Yadav* caste groups in 1978. Both these castes were, until then, in competing position since decades. Their victims were less powerful and powerless people from all castes. The gender implications of this institutionalised banditry were class relative. For instance, *Harijan* women were frequently attacked and sexually assaulted by the bandits. Living in a hamlet often without a door to provide security from the abductors, they were assaulted inside before their men during nights. Such activities were normal. The poor families with meagre sources for sustenance like small cattle, cottage poultry or grains had to loose their belongings at the hand of these bandits. This meant direct loss to woman of the family, as these activities constituted their main source of income. From the middle peasant families, their jewellery,

expensive clothes and other such items often preserved for themselves or for their daughter's marriage were taken away by force.

The bandits targeted all castes and classes, but the rich. The sexual crime targeted only *Harijan* women. The form of radical mobilisation was, therefore, 'anti-crime drive' that aimed at liberating common people from all caste and class from this organised crime. The issue of 'izzat' (dignity) of *Harijan* women acquired focus in Jahanabad, in same way as it happened to be during underground phase of mobilisation across Bihar. Initiated from Sikaria village, the mobilisation earned tremendous support from both men and women across all castes and classes. While *Harijan* stood at the forefront, the poor, lower middle and middle class peasant families from upper and middle castes, barring those who were complicit, extended their support to this anti-crime drive during late seventies. It took a few years to eliminate the criminal elements and liberate the society from this organised evil. Many of them were killed, many had to reform under the pressure of mobilisation, and many had to quit the village after facing social 'alienation' imposed on them by the people's court (3.3 below) as a part of punishment.

The struggle for a redistribution of land to the landless continued during 1980s after the anti-crime drive was over. Though not an area of huge land concentration like many parts of north Bihar, the 'resistance' to this campaign was tough in Jahanabad. The mobilisers had to adopt even 'tougher' strategies (3.3 below) to combat this resistant. With the WOs coming into existence, this campaign incorporated the issue of 'joint ownership' of land (redistributed to poor) in the name of husband and wife both. The struggle for a higher wage later occupied centre stage, as the newly rich farmers were not ready to raise it. The system of 'attach labour', often interpreted as 'labour bondage' by the left academia<sup>2</sup> in Bihar, which provided employment security before mobilisation began was not accepted by the rich farmers now taking up self-cultivation in a changed situation. Now the farmers wanted 'security of labour' but were not ready to provide 'security to labour' in return. Therefore, rich farmers were neither ready to pay higher wages nor willing to offer employment security. A complicated mode of capitalist as well as feudal forms of exploitation was obvious. The gender aspect of this combined mode of subjugation was preventing of women from entering the labour market, as the area did not face labour shortage. The incidence of *bataidari* was lower for three reasons: first, due to smaller holding size; second, rich peasants from cultivating castes (*Bhumihar*, *Kurmi*, and *Yadav*) with manageable holding size opted for self-cultivation; third, the consciousness generated through mobilisation made the landholders apprehensive of losing their plots

at the hand of *bataidars*. They often preferred to avoid risk involved in *bataidari*. Therefore, *bataidari* was restricted to within extended families. These features stand in sharp contrast to north Bihar.

The wage struggle, therefore, topped the economic agenda during 1980s. This later incorporated gender parity in wage. Women were deprived of breakfast provisions as a part of cash and kind combined mode of wage payment. This issue was taken up as a part of wage struggle. Wage enhancement for sowing and planting, one of the feminine work in farming was given added attention. This exceeds the government fixed minimum wage level in intense sites of struggle. The provision for breakfast as a part of kind and cash combined wage is now not 'absent' for women in many villages.

Water remained another constant issue of conflict in Jahanabad. The water crisis was resolved through ecologically evolved irrigation system of *ahar-pyne* (reservoir and canal) during *zamindar* period. This crisis intensified after *zamindari* was abolished. The rich peasant's drive for cost-intensive cultivation after the new technology was introduced, led them forcibly access more water. The small peasant with weaker resources had to face acute crisis. The private provisions of shallow tube wells and bamboo borings were hard to afford in Jahanabad, which is a low water table region (unlike north Bihar). The total absence of alternative public sector provisions to cater the growing need of the people further intensified struggle for water-sharing between rich and poor.

Jahanabad is still a 'land' of peasants, which is farmed, owned, irrigated and fought over. Land does not mean soil alone. Land is not simply viewed as the means of production either. This is why, for a tiny piece of land, blood is 'justifiably' spilled even today in the countryside. Had the land been viewed as a 'commodity' or just one of the means of production in the countryside in Jahanabad (or elsewhere in Bihar) the things would have been entirely different. It is against this cultural backdrop that the sense of attachment with land needs to be understood. Why even an 'absentee' landowner wants to retain land instead of disposing it off until his life and existence is threatened? Why a petty sharecropper feels the same degree of involvement with the tiny piece of land, s/he is cultivating and which is incapable of providing two proper meals a day? And, why a landless wage earner feels deep sense of 'deprivation' without a tiny piece of land? Why the meaning of being 'landless' is synonymous to being 'uprooted'? These questions cannot be simply explained in terms of 'reflections of feudal' traits in the countryside of

Bihar. Surely the land cannot be treated as a commodity and it is even more than the main means of production.

I attempt to describe three phases of Naxalite mobilisation below from a gender viewpoint though class perspective cannot be ignored, as both the issues were integrated in course of struggle.

## **2.1 The Underground Phase (1967-71): A Crusade Against Societal Patriarchy**

The first and 'underground' phase of radical mobilisation was centrally organised, secretive in action, and partially urban-based. Women's involvement was of indirect nature with low rate of participation. They played crucial role in organising support-networks. In the protracted struggles, they provided food, carried messages, sustained production on their own. The grassroots female leadership was negligible only with a few exceptions and the urban-based female leadership sprang up at the upper level of the organisational structure. Kelkar (1988) has documented the case profiles of some militant women who participated at the grassroots level and, at many occasions, came in direct encounter with the police during this phase of movement.

The mobilisation was unique in the sense that though theoretically it aimed at eliminating the exploitative system as a whole, the leadership understood the 'felt need' for assigning the problem of social oppression a higher priority than economic problems. This was in sharp contrast to the common Marxist perception of social oppression as a derivative of the economic inequality and exploitation. Therefore, 'war' against social forms of gender oppression, acquired centre stage right from the beginning. This concern was so pronounced that the Naxalites (activists) in common parlance were often 'identified' as those who fight sexual exploitation with their last drop of blood. The gender concern of Naxalite movement can in no better way be understood than the above fact illuminates. Therefore, rampant sexual attacks on lower caste labourer women considerably reduced after the first phase of the anti-feudal struggles was over.

This phase offered opportunity for women to grow as an active force within the movement in the course of 'protecting' their men from the state perpetrated violence and repression. They fought back police with their 'homely' weapons, helped men escape and hide them,

while police came with a search warrant, prevented police from entering the hide outs, and often seized their arms tactfully. At one of such occasions, a woman snatched away the service revolver from a police officer and it took three days to recover it from her only after the Superintendent of Police arrived to mediate (Kelkar, 1988). This phase of mobilisation substantially succeeded in pushing back the traditional feudal forces to a defensive position. Sexploitation and other forms of economic, social, and physical oppression of women came to a halt. The war against the 'societal patriarchy' was fought and won to a greater extent.

## **2.2 The Mass Phase (1977 – 1989): Battle Against Societal and State Patriarchies**

The radical organisations, though retained their organisational structure as underground acquired a mass character on front during second phase of mobilisation for two reasons: first, the anti-feudal struggle had succeeded in pushing the old feudal forces miserably on the defensive; and second, the party (CPI – ML) believed that with the middle caste dominated state power (represented by the Janata Party) the chances for state repression were negligible. Their belief that the newly emerged middle caste strata will be their ally, however, shattered with first ever massacre of *Harijans* by middle caste rich peasants in 1977 in Patna district. Another massacre took place in Jahanabad by same forces in early 1980.

Instead of experiencing relative social tranquillity that could have followed after the victory over the old order and resultant sharing of power by those who were powerless for centuries, the countryside in Jahanabad frequently collapsed with agrarian struggle. The power-struggle was now more intensified as the local state machinery often sided with the 'new' forces. While, the old feudal forces were on the defensive, the new forces were ruthless. These forces were least patronising (unlike the old one) and the nature of exploitation may be characterised as one of the capitalist superimposed on the feudal remnants. The new forces were deriving 'courage' and 'moral strength' from their representative ruling classes lodged at the centre of power.

This phase is thus marked by more intensified and brutalised nature of class and gender oppression in the context of a shifting caste-based politics in Bihar and militant forms of sustained mass struggles against it. The new forces from middle caste social origin, which were on the offensive and the defeated old feudal forces had discovered a natural



ally in them, because the lowest strata were in direct contradiction with both of them. The lower strata represented a class polarisation along with caste. This included *Harijan*, the poorest from other lower castes, middle castes and to some extent, even from the upper castes at some places. The blatant manifestation of arrogance of these new forces, which were 'reactionary' in character was formation of the caste based private armies and beginning of massacres of *Harijan* via them since 1977 just after the Janata Party came to power. The gendered manifestation of this arrogance was rise in coercive form of sexploitation of women by the members of these private armies often 'indirectly' supported by the local state machinery. What happened to be normally a paternalistic economically induced act was now a direct assault with a 'vindictive' attitude, wherever and whenever an opportunity was possible to get. The changed forms of societal patriarchy had a truce with the state patriarchy.

The radical mobilisation now had to fight another yet more decisive battle with these forces throughout 1980s. The mass nature of mobilisation (backed by the underground organisation) was adopted as the main strategy. Separate organisations of poor peasants and labourers were floated during late seventies. Though the prime agenda (of eliminating all forms of exploitation) remained intact, the local forms and conditions of gender oppression and class exploitation received attention. The sole exception to this major change in strategy has been the Maoist Coordination Centre (MCC), which remained underground and continued with its guerrilla warfare strategy. With this overall paradigm shift in the movement, women's issues began to be taken up more directly. Though the main organisational structure remained gender-neutral in nature, space for women were carved out in 'Village Committees'. This encouraged direct participation of women on large-scale on different levels of mass actions. Gender consciousness enhanced significantly in course of localised struggles on class and gender.

The mobilisation, doubly strengthened with its mass base (and underground squads to support in need) succeeded in demolishing all the caste-based private armies by mid-eighties. The rapists were identified and punished in public by people. The sexploitation of *Harijan* women came to a halt. This could be substantiated through a report of the People's Union for Democratic Right (PUDR), which quotes the Superintendent of Police of Jahanabad as saying, " .....In this area no one has the guts to touch a poor peasant woman, thanks to the work of the MKSS and the IPF.... (Terror in Jahanabad: 1989, A

PUDR report).” The battle against the societal and the state patriarchies succeeded in pushing them back to a greater extent.

This most violent phase of the movement in Jahanabad with a series of killings and counter-killings simultaneously heightened the gender consciousness. The poor widows (whose men were killed by private armies) were now more inclined to directly participate in ongoing struggle and ready to transform their ‘pain into their strength’. The need for constituting separate women's organisations for taking up women's issues began to be seriously felt. This phase is also marked by serious discontent and discourse within movement on growing gender-consciousness, which quite often received adequate attention in social action though remained ‘subsumed’ at personal and impersonal levels. The demand for redefining concepts like equality, participation, and decision-making from a gender perspective began to be raised by late 1980s from both men and women.

### **2.3 The Women’s Organisations (1987 onward): Confronting the Family Patriarchy**

The third phase of radical mobilisation is marked by formation of autonomous women's organisations (WOs henceforth) under ideological umbrella of different Naxalite organisations from late 1980s. This process began in 1977 with the Nari Mukti Sanstha, the first ever Naxalite women's organisation floated simultaneously with mass peasant and labourer organisations by the Provisional Coordination Centre (PCC), then the largest faction of the CPI (ML). The PCC was also first to adopt the strategy of mass struggle. The CPI (ML) Liberation and other groups followed the suit.

The Nari Mukti Sanstha had urban base and its leadership then identified ‘patriarchy’ as the main ‘contradiction’ and ‘detrimental’ to women liberation. This pathway to ‘future feminism’ in Bihar was later followed by autonomous radical feminist organisations in early 80s, Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini - a socialist student-youth organisation in mid-80s and other Naxalite women's organisations in late 80s. The Naxalite WOs accepted ‘patriarchy’ and ‘class’ both as the main contradictions and assigned ‘class’ an overarching prime position by early 1990s. There are three big Naxalite women’s organisations active in Jahanabad. They are: All India Progressive Women’s Association (AIWPA) formed under the umbrella of the CPI (ML) Liberation in 1989, Nari Mukti Sangharsh Samiti (NMSS) of the CPI (ML) People’s War formed in 1987, and Nari Mukti Sangh (NMS) of the Maoist Coordination Centre, formed in 1989.

With the WOs coming into existence, the 'family patriarchy' is now at occasions exposed to an encounter with mobilisation itself. Jahanabad is a site of intense class struggle as well as gender struggle against all three forms of patriarchies. While societal patriarchy is pushed to a defensive position the state patriarchy is on the most offensive. This produces class-relative implications as for women.

### **3. AIWPA, NMSS, NMS: THE FUNCTIONING**

The CPI-ML (Liberation), popularly known as Liberation, the CPI-ML (People's War) popularly called PW, and the Maoist Coordination Committee, known as MCC are three big Naxalite organisations active in Jahanabad. My exploration is restricted here to their women's organisations, the AIWPA, the NMSS, and the NMS with occasional reference to these three parent organisations.

#### **3.1 The Organisational Structure**

The organisational structure of the parent organisation allows women a dual membership. They are member of the WOs and at the same time, of the parent party as well. The member of the WOs are accommodated within party organisational structure according to their hierarchical position within WOs (and sometime, beyond that). For instance, the state secretary of the AIPWA is also a member of the central committee of the parent party, i.e. Liberation. Two other state level functionaries are member of the state committee of the party. The national secretary of the AIWPA is also a member of the apex organising body of Liberation. This organisational structure allows women take part in important decision-making processes within parent party. The basic organisational structure is the Village Committee (VCs henceforth) constituted on the principle to allow people's participation in all activities at the grassroots. This is the most powerful decision-making body at the grassroots. The highest powers are vested in VCs. The idea is to confer on the least powerful or powerless people the right to decide the fate of the erstwhile powerful people. This is a reversal of erstwhile prevailing social structure that confers this right on powerful people, who decide the fate of the powerless.

The numerical strength of a VC depends on class and caste composition of a village. The landless and small peasants occupy more than half of the total membership. Women's strength in the VCs has no limit. It depends on their participation strength in a particular

village. For instance, in some villages women may be found sharing fifty percent of the total numerical strength, while at some other, their strength may be found lesser.

WOs have separate Women's Committees (WCs henceforth). A member of the WC is also a member of the VC. The converse, however, does not apply though male members of the VC stand in supportive role for the WCs. The WCs are the main decision-making bodies for issues concerning women. The *Jan Adalat* (the People's Court) is the highest institution for delivering justice. This basic front organisational structure is almost similar in all three parent parties and the WOs.

### **3.2 *Jan Adalat*: The Alternative Institution for Social Justice**

The *Jan Adalat* is constituted of VCs and WCs. This is an institution created by people to deliver social justice according to people's consent. The vision for *Jan Adalat* is obtained from the traditional system of *Jan Panchayat* in India. In this system, local judicial powers were vested with the *Panch* (Judges), who usually happened to be acclaimed community leaders with a fair sense of judgment. This system of *Jan Panchayat* was different from the present system of *Gram Panchayat* - the local self-governing body in parliamentary democracy, though the present system<sup>3</sup> is also based on traditional system. The radical ideology has tried to reincarnate some of the old democratic systems and to create a local blend of old and radical methods rather than to emulate 'bourgeois' institutions. They see 'bourgeois' institutions as inherently anti-people and exploitative.

The *Jan Adalat*, therefore, offers an alternative system of social justice to those, who have to face 'injustice' within existing social system. Introduced two decades ago during second phase (mass phase) of mobilisation, this institution offers an effective alternative to 'defunct' *Gram Panchayats* (Bharti, 1989b) in many villages in central and south Bihar. Three factors contribute most to development of this institution:

- The defunct<sup>4</sup> state of *Panchayati raj* institutions;
- The anti-people role of police administration in settling down minor local disputes;
- The delayed, complex, and expensive judicial system.

It is against this anti-people socio-legal-administrative environment created by police bureaucracy, civil administration and judicial system that the popularity of a *Jan Adalat* needs to be assessed. Reversing the pyramid of local power structure, *Jan Adalat* has created a situation where those hitherto located at the apex of the social pyramid having sole rights to decide and dictate the fates of poor are now left with no option to submit before them. The 'judges' of the past are often found present as the 'culprits' before people in a *Jan Adalat* frequently organised according to people's need.

This, however, does not mean that *Jan Adalat* plays no role for others (than poor). This institution stands for all of them who approach for a justice. The concept is - to transfer the power of decision-making and judgment (from a few local elites) to common people. The objective is to cultivate an alternative pro-people culture of justice and offer an effective and quick solution to problems. The purpose is to encourage a participatory process of decision-making among common people through directly involving them in process of delivering 'natural justice'.

Precisely for these reasons this institution has earned popular support across all classes, those 'fewer rural elites' who have lost their power in this process. The climax of the situation could well be understood by the fact that now some of those rich people come to *Jan Adalats* for a 'quick' disposal of disputes, who (or whose fathers / forefathers) decided the destiny of the poor before.

One of the direct implications of WOs formation could be seen in increasing number of family disputes (second numerous) having been listed with *Jan Adalats* for a trial during 1990s. Matrimonial-conflicts, inter and intra-family property disputes, disputes involving atrocities and physical assaults including many other disputes were brought to *Jan Adalat* for a trial and final settlement. Cases of oppression related to desertion after marriage, desertion before marriage after involvement with another girl, dowry harassment, intoxication, rape, molestation, bigamy, violation of women's property rights etc. are heard and decided by the WCs, who constitute a part of *Jan Adalat*. If a culprit do not abide the judgment delivered by the WCs, the VCs come to help. Women lead and men support.

This institution offers a people's alternative to anti-people bourgeois legal system - some of the top rank police officials and civil administrators, who have served in Jahanabad

(and other such areas) share such views. For instance, Vijay Pal Jain (Director General of Police, Bihar) in an interview<sup>5</sup> in 1994, questioned lengthy and expensive judicial procedures and said that *Jan Adalats* were alternative system for a quick and fair delivery of justice. A senior lawyer from Jahanabad (who wants to keep his identity closed for professional reasons), practising at the Patna High Court, informed that now a days property disputes and *fauzdari* (cases related to physical assault) cases are readily shifting to *Jan Adalats* from the lower and higher courts of the law. Cases are settled at *Jan Adalats* and formal stamping of papers is done at competent courts and offices.

### **3.3 Jan Adalat: The Strategies and Methods of Struggle**

The set of strategies devised for delivering justice incorporates many stages and forms of direct and indirect action ranging from negotiation to punitive measures taken against a 'social culprit' identified by people. A 'social culprit' is defined as one who refuses to come to terms with the radical principle of creation of a society free from all forms of exploitation; one who violates the decisions of the party that aim at liberating poor and outcaste people from an exploitative order. The *Jan Adalat* acts as the prime monitoring and executing agency. The underlying principle of justice followed by the *Jan Adalat*, is the principle of natural justice. The nature and form of a crime decides the nature and form of a punishment.

Three kind of punitive actions are devised against a 'social culprit'. These are social, physical, and economic. Three aspects are taken care of while imposing a punishment on them:

- The punishment should have a 'reformist' impact and not a reactionary one;
- It should be 'effective' and 'affectivity potential' is evaluated by overall condition of a culprit;
- It is believed that 'affectivity potential' may vary considerably by personal profile of a culprit's family;
- The 'tolerance capacity', i.e. the capacity of a culprit to cope with the punishment. This capacity may be multi-dimensional such as social, economic, cultural, psychological etc. and / or all of these.

The recognition of 'relativity' aspect in jurisprudence also allows some scope for a 'feminine jurisprudence' as gendered crimes are tried and decided by women represented through WCs.

The people concerned report about the 'social culprits', the activists identify them and put into the list of cases recorded with the *Jan Adalat*. The cases are discussed. The resources and other profiles of a culprit are discovered through different sources and made known to people attending the *Adalat*. *Atmasamarpan* (surrender) before the *Adalat* is final objective for which various stages of actions are initiated one after another. With each successive stage, the nature and form of punitive action gets intensified. Before I describe these successive stages, it is a useful exercise to present the whole functioning through a simple Matrix (11.1) below:

Matrix 11.1: Functioning of the *Jan Adalat* with its Gender Implications

Successive Stages of Punishment	Stage-wise Actions against the Accused	Compound Effects of punishment on the Accused	Implications for the Accused Family	Gender Implications
1 <sup>st</sup> Stage	Notice Issue		Threat to power	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage	Negotiation		Involvement of the community	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Stage	Social Boycott		Isolating of the Community	Increase in Women's housework load
4 <sup>th</sup> Stage	Agricultural Blockade	3 <sup>rd</sup> + 4 <sup>th</sup> Stages	Production activity confined to family	Women are driven into Farming and post-harvest work
5 <sup>th</sup> Stage	Economic Blockade	3 <sup>rd</sup> +4 <sup>th</sup> +5th Stages	Production Prevented	Women are involved in direct clash with their poor counterparts
6 <sup>th</sup> Stage	Seizure of Farm and Produce	Control over land and produce lost	- Material basis of power demolished - Deserting the village	Women are last to desert the village as their safety and security is not threatened

### 3.3.1 Notice: The First Stage

The first stage of action begins with issuing a notice served to the culprit(s). The notice contains charges levelled against him and he is instructed to submit before *Adalat* for a trial. If he accepts charges an opportunity is provided to him to defend his position before the court (adalat) and the party / parties concerned and arrive at a mutual settlement. Normally medium peasants (culprits) surrender before the court just after they get a notice. The remedial actions on disputed issues are suggested. The *Jan Adalat* acts as a 'negotiating' body for sorting out trivial matters.

### **3.3.2 Negotiation-network: The Second Stage**

The accused may not submit at first stage. Now, the second stage is to negotiate with him through local network. The purpose is to convince, persuade, and pressurise the accused to take up remedial actions and change his accusable behaviour. Normally, rich peasants or big landholders refrain from submitting before the court at initial stages. The conciliatory processes may either fail or only partly succeed in resolving the conflicts.

### **3.3.3 Social boycott: The Third Stage**

The third stage of action is now initiated. This is social boycott of the accused. This includes breaking down of his association from social relation network and community support systems. For instance, depriving him of essential services that *jajmani* system offers, restricting him from attending social celebrations and ceremonial occasions. The purpose is to put the accused in a complete social isolation condition. Such restrictions are imposed, enforced, and supervised by the VCs. The worst form of social boycott is depriving the accused of giving or receiving a cup of tea or a glass of water from and to other families in village. The 'social boycott' continues with next stage of action.

### **3.3.4 Agricultural Blockade: The Fourth Stage**

Those who survive above three stages must be strong enough - resource wise. The *Adalat* now proceeds to next stage of action. This is agricultural blockade. The purpose is to block all farming activities and create survival crisis for accused and his family. The family cannot get labour, so they have to farm on their own. For a rich family, farming, post-harvest work, marketing of produce and all other associated activities are very hard to carry on and a survival crisis is often created. Social boycott continues simultaneously. The accused tries to resist blockade via hiring in labour from outside. The 'people's squad' now enter the scene to combat such resistance. This leads to frequent violent clashes between accused and squads. Agricultural blockade often succeeds in bringing some of the accused back to *Jan Adalat*, while some other quit (temporarily). Yet some other finally quit and shift to urban centres. And, some other still survive it for years.

### **3.3.5 Economic Blockade: The Fifth Stage**

Those who sustain 'agricultural blockade' are now imposed economic blockade, the most severe and advance stage of punitive action. This continues until the accused finally



surrenders before the court for a final settlement. Economic blockade severs all ties and relationships with outside transactions and markets for the accused. The purpose is to close down all avenues for a 'survival' for the accused family. While economic blockade is the last successive stage of punitive action, it may be imposed directly in some cases. This depends on gravity of crime. For instance, in case of an accused of Bathe massacre in 1997 in which many *harijans* were killed by an upper caste private army, *Jan Adalat* directly imposed economic blockade. This still continues.

Throughout this struggle the accused approaches local administration and other political and non-political connections for help. The local state machinery declares *Jan Adalat* as an 'extra-legal' parallel institution. The tug of war between people's form of 'justice' and state sponsored 'justice' continues. The meaning of justice radically changes for the parties involved.

In Jahanabad, the number of absentee landholders is high due to these blockades. Their power and prestige are challenged by people organised through *Jan Aadalat*. This makes their overall position so denigrated and vulnerable within village that desertion becomes the sole dignified escape route. Economic blockade is less numerous than agricultural blockade, nevertheless involves thousand of acres. An official list<sup>6</sup> prepared in 1999 informs about 1486 acres put under 'economic blockade' in Jahanabad district between 1983-1999. This involves altogether 518 persons in 73 families. The reasons (or the charges against the accused) are many, such as refusal to liberate redistributed land (by the government) to poor, refusal to liberate ceiling surplus land identified by mobilisers, wage dispute, *bataidari* dispute, grabbing of land in fictitious names as well as on behalf of religious institutions (*Mandir*, *Math*, and *Thakurbari*). Added to this list is the accused of massacres and members of killer squads of the private armies.

### **3.3.6 Seizure of the Produce and Farms**

If anyhow with the help of the local administration or otherwise an accused succeeds in breaking the 'economic blockade' through taking up farming or retaining market relations to a limited extent, the next stage of action is confiscation of produce and farms by the 'people's squad'. The seized produce is distributed among poor. The party activists cultivate seized farms. This often leads to violent clashes between the two parties.

How do poor, dependent on labour market for their sustenance cope with this situation? They efficiently do, because the orientation of mobilisers is to access substantial part of disputed land and offer it to labourers and petty *bataidars*, who are normally party activists, for collective farming. The access to disputed land may be of temporary nature in those cases, where ceiling surplus or other kind of government land grabbed by landholder is not involved. And, this 'access' may be transformed into 'ownership' (for the landless) if ceiling surplus or government land is involved. Migration to nearby places to work on construction sites, brick factories, rickshaw-pulling and other such labouring opportunities are also available to them in crisis.

The purpose of the punitive action is to offer 'natural justice', to make the accused realise that if they could deprive the poor of their right to life and sustenance, the poor too could seize their right to life and sustenance. The strategic condition is their strong mobilisation and militant organisational capabilities that could transform them from a 'vulnerable powerless group' to a 'powerful organisation', which an accused may find very difficult to reckon with. The other aspect is strengthening of informal markets within locality as surplus food produced (and seized) by party activists (poor labourers and *bataidars*) is marketed to lower middle peasants. The local circuit of informal market is strengthened.

Seen from a productivity position, it may be argued that 'blockades' have significantly reduced the share of effective holdings (about 30 percent of total acres put under 'blockades') in Jahanabad (3.3.5). A contrast situation vis-à-vis north Bihar (Tikapatti village) is revealing in this context. While cash-cropping has increased 'effective holding' in Tikapatti, 'blockades' have reduced it in Jahanabad.

### **3.4 Gender Implication of *Jan Adalat*: Contradiction and Continuity**

I begin with an extreme case of gender implication of this class war.

**Case 1:** In 1986, after a massacre in 'Kansara' village of Jahanabad, 'economic blockade' was imposed on some of the rich peasants involved in this crime. This continued for five years (1986-1991). Negotiation began between *Jan Adalat* and accused in 1991 and a settlement took place in 1993. The marriage of adult girls in this family remained stopped during these seven years. The marriage of one of these girls that was settled before, got 'unsettled' after the 'blockade' was imposed. She committed suicide after her marriage prospect was 'unsettled'.

This is not a single case. The terror of *Jan Adalat* reigns. Out of fear, kinship relations, intra and inter-community and caste networks all get disturbed. The accused family is stigmatised as 'unapproachable' for marital ties. The fear that men's lives are at risk does not allow other families marry off their daughters in accused families. And, conversely taking a daughter from an accused family (undergoing different stages of boycotts) can directly invite wrath of the 'Naxalites'. While staying 'unmarried' does not make much difference for men, it becomes a 'stigma' for a woman after a certain age.

The gender implications of the functioning of *Jan Adalat* are complex. The punishment decided for an accused involves his family with third stage. Women have to be increasingly involved in more household work, farming, post-harvest work and even in transaction work (Matrix 11.1 above) with successive stages of punishment imposed on accused man. They have to fight back their poor counterparts in the event of a clash and suffer other serious consequences. In this class-war, women from class enemy families are viewed as 'class enemy'. The punishment imposed on a 'man' or 'men' is, in practice, imposed on whole family.

How this overall set of punitive strategies adopted by *Jan Adalat* affect women across poor, middle and rich families? In the event of 'economic blockade', when women from accused family come out in a bid to resist it, for instance, approaching market or neighbour, they are resisted by poor women (party activists). Women cadres are directly pitched against rich women in course of a retaliation and protest during blockades.

It is amazing to observe how men on both sides get abstained from action and women get activated. Women, in rich (accused) families, who otherwise stay 'inside' are 'liberated' to move out for a transaction for survival. They are 'liberated' to work during night and poor women come out to resist them during night. Women of 'enemy classes' are directly pitched against one another. The class solidarity stands in contradiction to gender solidarity that is not completely 'absent' in normal social environment.

One such occasion for gender solidarity is the issue of sexual oppression. How rich women view the act of sexual offences committed by their men with lower caste-class women? Rich women are neither gender-blind nor class-blind on this sensitive issue. They respect mobilisers for struggling against such evils. Their reservation from and in

some cases, deep sense of hatred for sexual offenders of their class is well manifested. Their protest to such actions is also seen, yet their 'subordinate' position within family and class-contradiction inhibits them act against it or support mobilisers directly on this issue. It is, therefore, not surprising that mobilisation on gender issues usually earn (indirect) moral support from women of enemy class as well. Richer women have to face class and gender contradictions, whereas poorer women have to face class contradiction. They find gender as more continuous on such occasions.

#### 4. AIWPA, NMSS, NMS: THE AGENDA

Matrix 11.2: Agenda of the Radical Women Organisations

Ser. No.	AGENDA / THEMES	AIWPA	NMSS	NMS
1.	<b>Gender Opression Agenda</b>			
	Sexual Violence	*	*	*
	Dowry	*	*	*
	Dowry Murders	*	*	*
	Other Gendered Violence	*	*	*
2.	<b>State / Sena Repression Agenda</b>			
	Massacres by Sena	*	*	*
	State Repression	*	*	*
3.	<b>Economic Agenda</b>			
	Equal Property Rights	*		
	Equal Right to Land	*	*	*
	Equal Wage	*	*	*
	Employment	*		
4.	<b>Development Agenda</b>			
	Fighting Back Bureaucratic Feudalism	*	*	*
	Women Development Schemes	*		
5.	<b>Guarantee for Basic Civic Facilities</b>			
	(i) General and Reproductive Health	*		*
	(ii) Sanitation	*		*
	(iii) Education	*		*
6.	<b>Cultural Agenda</b>			
	Prostitution			*
	Vulgar Culture			*
	Liquor Consumption		*	*
7.	<b>Creating Alternative Culture</b>			
	Radical forms of Collective Marriage		*	*
	Radicalisation of Holi Festival			*

The WOs view state and societal patriarchies as systems, which are at the root of all forms of oppression and exploitation of women. Nari Mukti Sangha recognises 'state patriarchy' as the prime contradiction and argues that without a radical transformation of state women liberation is out of question. The societal and family patriarchies are seen as

secondary contradictions. The main oppressors identified by all three WOs are state, *sena* (private armies), police, economically and politically powerful men and police-criminal nexus. They argue that women, in general and poor women, in particular, have to face common blow of rising price, unemployment, discriminatory wage, minimum wage deprivation, patriarchal mode of land ownership, illiteracy, lack of education and health facilities - all of these accentuated by societal and state patriarchies. The role of family patriarchy in depriving women of equal opportunities is an integral part of societal and state patriarchies. The visible and invisible hands of family patriarchy in perpetrating domestic violence is also recognised by the WOs. This is clear from their gender oppression agenda. The agendas of all three WOs are presented below in Matrix 11.2. It is evident that many issues are common to all while some of these are distinct.

The feudal vestiges of societal patriarchy locally represented by big landholders, police and goonda (musclemen) nexus perpetrate the gender oppression. The sexual violence perpetrated by private armies before and femicide by them now are the most glaring examples of societal patriarchy as well. Meena, district secretary of the AIWPA in Jahanabad, Kiran of the NMSS and a senior representative of the NMS (who abstains from being quoted by name) argue that declaration of *Ranvir Sena* (see 6 below) to 'kill women with their infants so that Naxalites could not be 'reproduced'' needs to be seen in this context. The femicide (killing of women) is the blatant manifestation of the societal patriarchy, which gets covert and overt support from the state patriarchy via police-*sena* nexus. The police-*sena* nexus in Jahanabad is not a new phenomenon (Bharti, 1989a and 1989c) new is indiscriminate killing of women and children as they are found to be 'soft targets' while men are absent. The modern forms of state repression are also more ruthless than the traditional one, argue Saroj Chaubey, of the AIWPA and Jyoti of the NMSS. For instance, women were not beaten up by police before, as it is frequently occurring now. The NMS representative, while agreeing to above position adds that more repression reflects more liberation. She continues, why women are not raped (like before) and instead killed now (by *sena*) because they appear to be 'powerful threat'.

Sexual violence such as rape, dowry murders, molestation, abusive behaviour after liquor consumption, abuse of women's rights and dignity via extra-marital, bigamous, polygamous relations – all reflect societal as well as family patriarchal values. While lower class and caste women have to suffer most of these oppressions in class / gender structural framework, rich and middle class women are relatively 'free' and better placed

on gender plane – the representatives of all three WOs share this view. The established notion that lower caste / class women are more 'liberated' than middle and upper class / caste women from a gender position is an 'academic myth' – they say. The reality is that poor women have remained crushed under the burden of all three patriarchies and after sustained mobilisation of both men and women now they are vocal. The family patriarchy is more powerful in upper social levels (caste and class both) but women in such families are so contented with their comforts that they hardly question their men's abusive behaviour with poor and lower caste women. They have to give up comforts and start protesting their men first if they are to be truly 'liberated'. This, however, does not mean that movement ignores them if they are in trouble. If they come to WCs, their grievances are redressed. For instance, a Brahmin widow was abducted and raped. The *Jan Adalat* convicted the culprits (Case 2 below).

Numerous struggles continue on rape, dowry murders, molestation, wife battering, deprivation of property rights and numerous issues. Dowry murders are middle and upper class 'aberrations' - say WOs representatives, which 'we cannot ignore'. But the 'custodial rape' is another burning issue in Bihar, another blatant manifestation of state patriarchy and 'we need to divert our attention immediately towards this', in the event of such an occurrence. The NMS and the NMSS representatives say that a whole cultural transformation is required and therefore, 'we promote *'shivir vivah'* (collective marriage), which is a radical alternative to dominant form of marriage that allows dowry and wastage of huge money over show offs. The radical collective marriage becomes poor people's affair as middle and rich men and women, though appreciate but cannot replicate it.

The secondary occupation of the WOs is active participation in class-based revolutionary struggle against state and *sena* repression, communal forces, new economic policy and globalisation – all in association with peasant and other mass organisations. Strong mobilisation and direct action in early 1990s by the NMSS against liquor consumption, production and distribution in Jahanabad has resulted in considerable decline in liquor consumption and anti-women violent practices within family and around. Such mobilisation has to face tough resistance from producer-distributor network, on the one hand and state repression, on the other, in the event of direct action taken by mobilisers. Direct action becomes a compulsion after all kind of democratic protest actions fail. This involved attacking and ransacking of illegal liquor factories and invites police oppression that often results in indiscriminate arrest and torture of the activists both women and men.

While curbing of liquor production and consumption partially succeed, the actual gain is mass awareness against liquor consumption (especially among poor, who are prone to this habit) and a change in their consumption habits and abusive behaviour with their women. The mobilisation is led by the WOs and peasant and other radical youth organisations extend support. The NMS has a more acute anti-liquor programme that includes organising of school going children to raise voice against alcoholism. Direct actions are always taken as the last option by both the WOs. The NMS, in direct action during its anti-liquor campaign in another area destroyed *ganja* (a kind of intoxicant plant) plants. AIWPA has been more interested in exercising pressure on local development bureaucracy for implementing some development schemes in Jahanabad.

Organised protest against police repression is another live agenda (Matrix-11.2 above). For instance, in Guljarbigha village, police killed some male activists in a fake encounter. The WOs participated in protest actions. In Imamganj, women were subjected to *lathi* charge (beaten up by wooden sticks) by police, which badly injured two female activists of the NMSS. In yet another village Kachnawan, WOs protest demonstration against police repression has been impressive and effective.

The NMS puts additional thrust on cultural transformation that is reflected in its cultural agenda (Matrix 11.2 above). For instance, NMS believes that capitalism perceives women as a sex object. This is projected in different forms of vulgar exposure of women in urban areas while its reflections could be seen in countryside as well. Her campaigns against anti-women vulgar culture include preventing exhibition of vulgar films, dances, literature, posters and other kind of exhibiting devices. Prostitution is perceived by the NMS as the most 'denigrated' form of womanhood that is perpetuated by the system. The campaigns against prostitution include a demand (from the state) for provisioning of alternative employment opportunities of dignified nature for these women. The NMS is different from other two WOs in one more sense. It involves organisation of school going adolescent (both boys and girls), called Krantikari Kishore Sangha (KKS) in her programmes. The argument is - to initiate a process of cultural transformation at a growing age. This would help for preparing ground for creating an alternative human culture in future.

The NMS also believes that ensuring of food, cloth, shelter, medicine and education to all citizens is the basic condition for a government to remain in power. Her campaign on these issues includes such demand from the state. Reproductive health, sanitation, and

female education are given priority. If democratic methods of protest fail, the NMS takes up direct action to ensure such facilities.

The occasion of *Holi* festival was (mis)used in this region as an occasion by upper and middle caste men for taking liberty with lower caste poor women. Sustained mobilisation eliminated this practice (Bharti, 1990a). The NMS, in association with radical cultural organisation Krantikari Sanskritik Sangha (KSS) has evolved an alternative practice of observing *Holi* festival. This condemns vulgar culture inflicting this festival and revives the real spirit of traditional *Holi*. This means encouraging the sense of love, harmony and fraternity among people across all castes, community, and among rich and poor alike.

In another bid to create a revolutionary alternative to existing marriage system, the NMS, in association with the KSS organises *shivir vivah*. This form of alternative marriage evolved by the NMS is based on the ideals of *gandharva vivah* (a kind of marriage performed just through exchange of garland between the partners) popular during ancient times in India. This is reincarnated with incorporating modern democratic gender-egalitarian values. The WOs do not believe in imposing radical cultural practices on people, because,

"The way to the socio-cultural revolution could never be straightforward and the mindset of the people could not be changed overnight. It requires a prolonged transitional time. Socio-cultural change is a slow pace phenomena. The radical practices are also rooted in good traditions, therefore, radical is, in fact, traditional reincarnated in nature and forms suited to the present day. "

The above statement comes from one of the leading NMS representatives. The NMSS and AIWPA both subscribe to this view, though AIWPA takes a more 'radical feminist' approach to gender relations, which does not come in conflict with NMS model of radicalism. The NMSS and the NMS both organise *shivir vivah* at least once in a year to encourage self-negotiated inter-caste and inter-communal marriages without dowry and Brahminical rituals though this may be organised more frequently on demand .

## 5. WOS, JAN ADALAT, AND GENDER

How the WOs take initiative and call for *Jan Adalats* on gender issues such as women's property rights, conjugal disputes, desertion and oppression to take up and decide could



be substantiated through some cases cited below. These cases are taken up and decided by *Jan Adalat* at the initiative of NMSS. While NMSS and NMS both tackle such cases more or less in same manner, the NMS deals hardest with the 'custodial rapists'. The party squads often kill the policemen responsible for custodial rapes.

Crime against women and sexual offence against them, in particular, is treated as most serious nature of crime by *Jan Adalat*. The nature and form of punishment for such crimes are decided with a vision that assigns key importance to three factors: one, the victim woman should recover from the trauma of being humiliated and her self-esteem be restored; two, the culprit should not only suffer punishment but also be made realise that he is the most 'wretched' creature in the locality; third, the society at large be made feel that no social and moral sanction be granted to such heinous act.

The right to punishment is now conferred on the victim woman who in consultation with the WCs decides the set of punishments for the criminal. Some common forms of social punishment, in sequence, are:

- The victim woman is allowed to beat up the culprit in public. If she is not ready to initiate for any reason, other women do it for her collectively. Men also join women in this collective beating exercise by shoes. A rapist, if belongs to a prestigious family or upper caste, could in no better way be demoralised but to be beaten up by the victim woman herself and by *harijan* men and women, whom he looks down.
- The hairs and moustaches of the culprit are shaved off. His face is painted with lime powder and '*balatkar*' (rapist) word is painted on his back.
- With this humiliating posture, he is lodged on the back of a donkey and taken for a public demonstration in surrounding villages. Nothing could be as humiliating for a man as such a social humiliation in a village society.

The WOs and the *Jan Adalat* have coined a term - 'cultural rapist' - for those who are habitual of committing such crimes. They are bandits and musclemen organised under the banner of a private army. For such criminals, 'social prestige' is not much important. Therefore, they are punished severely in physical and economic terms. Some of these elements, if do not reform and carry on committing sexual crimes, are finally annihilated by the 'people's squads'.

## 5.1 Fighting Out Societal and Family Patriarchy

It is not only poor *harijan* women who may be subjected to sexual assault. In a changed social environment old caste-class congruence is also changed. A rise in economic status may be reflected in a reactionary nature of arrogance. The middle caste rich peasants, mainly *Yadav* and *Kurmi* are on the offensive. One of the reflections of such arrogance is committing sexual offence with poor women from middle and upper caste. Two cases below illustrate this.

**Case 2:** In Bishunpura village, a lone poor Brahmin widow was abducted from her cottage by a *Yadav* caste rich man and raped. The man taking undue advantage of the noisy atmosphere of *Holi* festival committed this crime. The poor woman approached the WC of the NMSS and *Jan Adalat* took up this case. The culprit was severely punished with physical, economic, and social, a set of all three penalties.

In other case,

**Case 3:** Kiran, a poor woman from middle caste, a resident of Bhusainchak village was gang-raped by three men and they snatched away her jewellery. The NMSS called *Jan Adalat*. All three rapists were taken into custody by the 'people's squad'. The jewellery were recovered. The culprits were severely beaten up by the victim and *harijan* men and women. Economic penalty was also imposed on them.

### Punishment For Violence in Marriage

**Case 4:** Another woman in Machhil village after suffering prolonged oppression by her husband committed suicide. The WC listed this case with *Jan Adalat*. The WC decided that the culprit husband should seek a public excuse first. Then, his hairs were shaved off and a poster calling him '*hatyara*' (killer) was pasted on his back. With this posture, he was taken to five villages for a public humiliation. The activists, both female and male narrated his misdeeds before people. Heavy economic penalty was also imposed in addition.

Such punishments aim at humiliating the culprit as well as exposing his wrong deeds before public. The economic penalties are imposed in addition. The WOs have to care for the cultural environment it works in. For instance, case of an unmarried girl abducted by a man may be a delicate issue to tackle (below):

### Punishing An Abductor

**Case 5:** Naresh Singh of Bhewar-Sikaria village abducted a girl. The parents of the girl approached NMSS, because they felt that local police would not only

harass but also expose the matter causing embarrassing situation for them and the abducted girl, in particular. The NMSS in its enquiry discovered that Naresh was a habitual abductor and had repeated such act with three other girls. The case was listed with *Jan Adalat*. The culprit was 'privately' taken into custody to recover the girl from his clutches. He was seriously warned against this act and economic penalty was imposed, in addition.

This issue was not publicised because, the young girl and her family would have to face problems in her marriage. How radical the NMSS can act through *Jan Adalat* is revealing in another case (below):

#### **Establishing Conjugal Rights Without A Formal Marriage!**

**Case 6:** Shamo Khatoon of Makhdumpur lived with Aftab Alam for nearly 10 years and became mother of his child. Even then, Aftab declined to marry her. Shamo approached NMSS. *Jan Adalat* was called for hearing this case. The WC decided that no formal marriage was required in this case. Aftab will have to accept Shamo as his wife and her baby's father. It was also decided that she would exercise all rights of a wife and Aftab would take all obligations of a husband and father. She would live and share his house and everything, the way a wife shares her husband's assets and resources. This decision was served to his parents and brothers as well.

The NMSS deals dowry seekers with tough hands and help those who cannot, for any reason, resist such pressures. This is evident from the case cited below:

#### **Dealing Tough with Dowry Seekers And Restoring of Conjugal Rights**

**Case 7:** Amaresh married her beloved in a temple, because his parents were against their inter-caste marriage. His parents decline to accept her. Amaresh not only deserted his wife under pressure of his parents but also agreed for second marriage with heavy dowry offer in his own caste. The girl approached NMSS, which called *Jan Adalat*. The notice was served to Amaresh and his parents. They were directed to accept their marriage and take the girl into their family as their daughter in-law. This case was widely publicised in village and around.

In yet another case the NMSS through *Jan Adalat* helped a women who was deprived of property rights after her husband's death on the ground that she was his second wife.

#### **Restoring of Property rights**

**Case 8:** Saraswati Devi was married to a widower who had a daughter from his first marriage. The man died after 13 years of his second marriage. Saraswati became sick and for prolonged treatment went to her parent's home. Her in-laws, in her absence, not only married off their grand daughter but also registered all property of her father in her name, completely depriving Saraswati of her rights. She approached *Jan Adalat* through NMSS. *Adalat* served notice to her In-laws. They were directed to register half of the property in her name. The court also

protected her right to stay or not to stay with her in-laws. She finally went to stay with her parents.

## **5.2 Fighting Out Patriarchy within Parent Organisation**

While fighting out caste, class, patriarchy in public spheres how a man of the same organisation becomes patriarchal and castiest in his family - here is a glaring instance from a village in Jahanabad.

**Case 9:** In a village, near Arwal block in Jahanabad, daughter of a People's War activist got involved with an activist of another radical organisation CPI (ML) New Initiative. They decided to get married. The father of the girl declined to accept their decision and threatened the man and his family of dire consequences, if he did not withdraw. The man, in turn, approached the organisation he was affiliated to. The issue was discussed at the organisational level. The father of the girl strictly opposed this marriage proposal. It was only after the People's War took a tough stand on this issue and instructed him to accept this proposal on ideological grounds, he agreed to materialise this marriage.

Being patriarchal may not always be a male 'distinction'. I need to cite here Mies (1986:156) who has referred to Indira Gandhi (while dealing with a victim of rape) as behaving like, what I would call, as a blatant patriarch! Patriarchy is not only a system, it is a culture as well. Going by these criteria many men may not fall under the category of patriarch and many women can well be declared as great patriarchs! I have a wonderful case from one of the three WOs itself to illuminate as how a feminist activist grew patriarchal with her growing status within organisation.

### **Becoming patriarchal with growing feminist consciousness**

**Case 10:** A local activist of one of these three WOs with her growing 'feminist' consciousness developed relationship with another man (outside organisation) and decided to break off her first marriage after acquiring important position in organisation. She also declined to take the responsibility of their children and asked her husband - a full time activist in the same party- to take this responsibility. Her husband, unlike many activists, had encouraged and helped his wife to become an activist, work with the WO, grow and acquire important position in the organisation. Her decision to divorce her husband, when informed to the parent organisation, was initially opposed but finally the core leadership adopted a liberal and 'non-patriarchal' attitude.

This case also stands in contrast to **Case 9**, in which the parent organisation took a tough stand with a 'patriarchal' man and instructed him to abide by the non-patriarchal ideology. Here, the parent organisation, to defend its non-patriarchal attitude had to not only accept

the 'patriarchal' behaviour of a 'feminist' woman but also to continue her with her position in the WO though her second husband has nothing to do with radical politics. Her ex-husband, throughout this process of marriage break remained most keen about children and accepted (after the woman declined for the same) their full responsibility.

### 5.3 Strategy, Relation, Orientation: A Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis of three radical WOs is required to comprehend their present stage of strategic orientation. It is also important to understand the relationship of these WOs with the state, their parent organisations and with other non-radical WOs. Their relationship with one another is crucial as this entails a whole range of consequences for their action. These comparisons are presented in Matrix 11.3 below.

Matrix 11.3: AIWPA, NMSS, NMS: A Comparison

Orientation and Relationships	AIWPA	NMSS	NMS
<b>Strategic Orientation</b>			
Action	Reformist	Radical	Radical
Gender and Class Contradictions	Gender primary Class secondary	Class primary Gender secondary	Gender and Class Continuous
<b>Relationships</b>			
With the State	Claims Avoids conflicts	Conflicts	Claims and Conflicts
With the Parent Organisation	Inclined towards Autonomy	More continuity	Autonomous Yet Continuous
With radical WOs	Polemical	Polemical	Polemical
With non-radical WOs	Issue based Alliance In action	Prohibits action	Tactical alliance In action

Matching this Matrix (11.3) with the Matrix 11.2 suggest that agenda of the AIWPA can be said to have a more reformist nature of gender orientation. AIWPA assigns 'gender' a primacy over 'class' and believes in staking women's claims before the state. While a confrontation with state machinery may not be ruled out in the claiming process, AIPWA tries to avoid it. The struggle against state patriarchy is more of a reformist nature. This could further be substantiated through growing concern of AIPWA for demands like constitution of a 'women's commission', implementation of thirty three percent reservation for women in all elected bodies and other such provisions. The growing inclination of AIWPA towards getting state sponsored provisions for poor women is sharp reflected in action. For instance, the AIPWA has succeeded in constructing 16 toilets for women in

Jahanabad and many other such government-sponsored schemes are secured for poor women. The AIWPA acts as a 'mediator' between local development administration and poor women.

The NMS assigns both 'gender' and 'class' equal importance and therefore, both go continuous and simultaneous. The NMS believes in staking strong claims for basic civic amenities for women and ensuring these from the state, but unlike AIWPA, does not shies away from a direct conflict with the state in claiming and ensuring process. The NMSS assigns 'class' primacy over 'gender'. It does not stake claims and rather believes in direct confrontation with the state.

These precise positions of the WOs on gender and class issues are less of a declaratory nature and more of a functional. The declaratory positions usually do not contradict declaratory positions of their parent organisations, which assign primacy to 'class' and secondary position to 'gender'. As I have mentioned above (2) that parent organisations usually take a liberal, flexible and functional approach to the issues and class and gender issues normally do not come in sharp conflict. If ever these conflicts arise this is amicably resolved. Yet for an analytical clarity I have explored and located these contours on the basis of their functioning and dominant nature of their activities.

These positions also reflect upon the nature of relationship between the WO and her parent organisation. For instance, AIWPA's reformist nature of gender orientation reflects a more inclination towards 'autonomy' from its parent organisation, which has incorporated democratic parliamentary path of radical transformation into its agenda in mid-80s. Seen from this perspective, the NMSS's radical nature of class orientation (gender being secondary contradiction) reflects a more 'continuity' with her parent organisation, which still believes in underground strategy of class struggle for a radical transformation of society, the pre-condition for which is overthrowing of the system itself. Though, NMSS is a mass organisation working on the ground, the 'autonomy' is entertained not beyond the basic ideology of the parent organisation. The NMS is 'autonomous' from its parent organisation yet 'continuous' with its ideological position, because it has a whole set of alternative agenda discussed and devised in consultation with the parent organisation. The parent organisation is staunch believer in threatening and crumbling the state power and creating an alternative people's democratic system simultaneously. It also believes in underground strategy of class-war. Nevertheless, the

NMS is a mass organisation working on the ground in its autonomous yet continuous (with the parent organisation) capacity. In fact, NMS is the largest front organisation of the MCC as it is completely underground.

These positional dimensions, obviously, liberate AIPWA for a more wide range associations with other non-radical organisations but it never goes in joint action and rather extends support to them. The NMSS and the NMS both prohibit any functional relationship with non-radical organisations and polemical relationship is out of question.

The crucial issue is absence of any functional truce between these radical WOs in spite of much continuity in their agenda. Here, again distinct positions of the parent organisations and WO's 'continuity' with them become decisive. Arguing on this issue I came across different opinions from three organisations.

While AIPWA argues that NMSS and NMS are 'close' and 'stuck' with their parent organisations, the NMSS says that AIPWA, in its attempt to pursue a populist gender agenda is gradually 'alienating' itself from the grassroots in Jahanabad (and other areas). The NMS argues that, neither of them recognise that,

'We have an alternative concept of 'radicalism' in every sphere of women's life (men's as well) so why can't they come together if we all share same goal? Obviously, our goals are different in spite of the fact that many issues in our agenda coincide. Yet the approaches to the issues are different.'

The NMS brands AIPWA as 'revisionist', suffering from 'bourgeois deviations'. And, the NMSS, in her opinion, is losing its mass character because it is not adequately 'liberated' from its parents. The arguments and counter-arguments on 'autonomy' and 'lack of continuity' between radical WOs are many and multifarious. Even though, autonomy issue is ignored for strategic reasons and also for 'deviation' argument, the issue of joint action is crucial for a solidaristic radical feminism to evolve in future. It is relevant to put here the version of a senior leader of one underground parent organisation:

A 'continuity' with the parent organisation is required as without a clear class vision gender vision in our social context gets blurred and deviated towards a slippery path of counter-revolution.....we experience this in day to day practice...this is different from the 'divisibility' (that primacy to gender is divisive for class solidarity) perception of the traditional left.

Responding to my question on joint action issue, he frankly shares his view with me:

This is our weakness and therefore, the weakness of the movement as well. In fact, before proceeding to joint action we need to resolve our internal contradictions. We are trying ...and hope to get some results in near future.

Why cannot WOs take an initiative? The answer is hidden in the statement cited above. Saroj Chaubey, Meena, Sunita, Kiran, and others (from all three WOs), however, argue little different. All of them more or less say,

We interact on polemical issues, share seats in seminars, workshops, discussions and other such occasions, interact through publications and through many others such methods. We are distinct but never in conflict. Therefore, distinction is not divisive. Nevertheless the question of solidarity is valid and it is possible only if our ideological unity and solidarity becomes possible.

The WOs ultimately reach the same conclusion though with different argument. While such debates deserve attention, it is actions and problems on the grassroots that calls for most serious attention. The current situation on the ground may be characterised as continuation of a process of violence and counter-violence between reactionary and radical forces since mid-90s in Jahanabad. I need to address this issue (7 below) before arriving at final conclusion.

## 6. CLASS, GENDER, PATRIARCHIES IN TUG-OF-WAR

The relation between inequality and social conflict is extremely complex. Whereas conflicts may be expected to be common where inequalities are sharp and visible, they sometimes, appear in their most acute forms where inequalities are actually declining. In such a situation, one has to consider inequalities not only as they exist but also as they are perceived. Thus, it is the real decline in inequality in Jahanabad, which is accompanied by a heightened comprehension of the differences, which persists.

The strong mobilisation and 'punitive' measures, especially 'economic blockades' continuing for years together, taken by the *Jan Adalat* aimed at 'reform' has perpetuated 'reaction' in the long run among those who are 'accused' of the poor people. The striking culmination of this reaction is formation of the most dreaded class-based private army of the upper caste rich peasants called '*Ranvir Sena*' (*sena* henceforth) in 1994, which perceives 'Naxalites' as the enemy of the peasantry in central Bihar. The site of some of the massacres of the poor by this *sena* again became Jahanabad.

The gender-specific brutality of the *sena* can be understood by the fact that in four big massacres during 1997-99 altogether 108 persons (all *harijan*) were killed, of which 54,



i.e., just 50 percent were women and many others were children of both the sexes. The victim adult females outnumber the victim adult male. The Naxalites, in retaliation killed altogether 45 persons, all adult male from the upper caste. They were either squads and activists of the *sena* or their sympathisers. This situation is further manipulated by the *sena* in direct collaboration with political parties sharing the state power. This complex situation has made radical mobilisation also a much more complex affair than before. The genesis of the politics of violence and counter-violence lies here.

I have argued above (3.4) that richer women have to face class / gender contradictions, whereas poorer women find class and gender as more continuous. The recent occurrences, however, suggest that gender and class often go continuous in case of richer women as well. Some cases illustrated below reflect the contradiction and continuity between gender and class. And, also how patriarchy finds opportunity to constrain rich and middle class women caught up in this peculiar situation. How an upper caste widow has to cope with this situation, the case cited below is revealing:

**Case 11:** Chintamani Devi (58) of Senari village has lost her husband and single adult son. In Senari, 34 upper caste men (all said to be sympathisers of the *sena*) were killed in 1999 by the MCC in retaliation to killing of 108 *harijans* (all said to be Naxalites) by the *sena*, in different parts of Jahanabad. She came out first to lodge a complaint with the local police station against the Naxalite squads just after the massacre. Her most serious problem is, marriage of her 18 year old daughter Madhulika, as no one would come ahead to marry her not only because her father and brother are killed by the Naxalites but also because, her mother is seen as the most 'courageous lady of Senari', who has invited the wrath of Naxalites after lodging complaint against them.

Chintamani, in an informal talk, says that she was having 'positive' feelings for the Naxalites before, but now treats them as 'killers'. I ask - how about the men of her own caste, who are killing poor *harijans*, not only men but women and children as well that the Naxalites never do? She keeps quiet for a while and then says, " my husband and son were not with the *sena*, they were innocent." But, many *harijan* men, women and two year old children killed by the *sena* too were innocent, I argue. She has no answer.

Many women in Senari have lost their spouses, and sons both. They are left with adult daughters. All have to face the same crisis. The class and community in such critical situations, instead of extending helping hands, shy away. The gender and class stand in contradiction. In some cases, the young widows are 'stigmatised', while in some other they are forced to remarry the other man of the family.

**Case 12:** A young widow (who requested to keep her name secret) in her twenties, informed that she has been forced to marry her deceased husband's brother against her consent. The sole reason is that the heavy amount of compensation paid to her by the government, in lieu of her husband's death, could be 'secured' by the family. She argued that poor widows are much more liberated and strong as they can do whatever they want and the party men also support them. This liberty helps them overcome their sorrow even if they have to face hard survival problems. While, 'I am remarried, have no money crisis, yet feel no pleasure in my life!'

**Case 13:** In another family, a 17-year-old widow (name requested to be kept secret) has been stigmatised by her in-laws as responsible for her husband's 'death', though he was a *sena* activist and killed by Naxalite squads. The in-law's family deserted her. She is staying with her parents, who are looking for another match, as she is very young. 'This is very hard to get', say her parents, 'because she is a widow of the *sena* activist.'

Obviously, the *sena* neither represents the aspirations of its 'class' nor earns a 'high' reputation of a 'salvation army'. How common people and women in such families are caught up in this situation, if they maintain a distance from *sena* and Naxalites alike can be understood from the case cited below:

**Case 14:** Tilakdahri Singh of Ahiyara village is looking for a groom for his daughter for last two years. 'No one is willing to marry her because no one wants to invite the wrath of the *sena*. His 'crime' is that he does not support *sena*'s activities, though keeps away from the Naxalites as well.

In another village dominated by *harijans* the situation is not much different. The villagers have stopped celebrating festivals fearing a retribution. Before this phase of violence and counter-violence, common people from both upper castes and *dalits* used to assemble at a common place on the festivals, particularly *Holi* - says Balram Yadav of Arwal. 'Now same people abuse and kill each other.' In Narhi village, at least 11 marriages were cancelled in 1996 and no marriage has taken place after - informs Umesh Paswan. These are the expressions of those, who are nowhere in this tug-of-war, nevertheless, have to face the consequences.

How rich and middle class (upper caste) widows react to this grave situation? Some of them pursuing path of their (dead) husbands have declared war against the Naxalites. They have withdrawn their school going sons and given 'arms' in their tiny hands. While some other have opted for an 'escape' from the village and start life afresh with their children. In this effort their relatives located at the urban centres support them. A recent development is yet more striking. Some of these 'massacre widows' have organised into

a "women's squads" under the banner of the *sena*. They were also organised for political campaign during 1999 parliamentary elections (Sinha and Sinha, 2001).

The poor widows react to this grave situation in a different way. Their number is in hundreds, because killing of *harijan* men by private armies began more than two decades ago. The retaliatory killings of the upper caste and middle caste men (activists of different private armies) began during mid-80s. In the nineties, this process got intensified. Therefore, crisis for the poor widows is not a new event. The movement extends all supports that it can. The poor widows pursuing the Naxalite slogan of '*shok ko shakti mein badal do*' (transform sorrow into strength) successfully prevented the politicians and state administration to enter their *Bastis* (hamlets) after women and children were massacred and asked for arms to resist the *sena*. The gender and class are in more continuity.

Sunita, of the NMSS (cited above), who has recently lost her husband, a party activist, in police repression talks about her decade long experience of revolutionary struggle in Jahanabad and informs that with increasing gender awareness among poor the 'class struggle' is strengthening. But, the formation of the *sena* and killing of innocent people compels WOs to divert their attention towards a combating strategy from constructive programmes. She fiercely argues that nothing exists like 'gender solidarity' in the areas of intense class-struggles because,

"I have not heard single voice of protest from rich and middle class 'massacre widows' (as media calls them) against the killing of poor women and infants by their men, though they are out in public to join a 'widow's convention' and for electoral campaign on the bedecked jeep christened *Karuna rath*<sup>7</sup> (chariot of compassion). Where is gender solidarity?

## 7. CONCLUSION

What does this overall situation suggest for the mobilisation aimed at radical social change? The gender issue, against the backdrop of 'femicide' has emerged afresh within movement. Growing number of poor widows though ready to transform their 'sorrow into strength' have to face harder survival crisis than before. They are not given 'compensation' by the government as easily as it is given to a rich widow. They ask for the 'guns' for self-resistance and they have to earn 'bread' very hard. Movement is not blind to all this. It is encouraging that gender is carving out more space within a complex caste-class debate within Naxalite movement.

What about rich and middle class widows and spinsters? Obviously, in a class-war it is not the responsibility of the opposite class (here the poor) to care for the 'class enemy'. The class-collaborator males are either busy in 'war' or if not, are facing crisis together with their daughters and wives but offer no exit point for a rescue in critical situations, some of these revealed in the cases cited above. Caste and community extends support only until they feel 'safe' and 'secure'. The sorrow of the rich 'massacre widows' is 'used' for electoral campaign<sup>8</sup>. This is qualitatively different from 'transformation of sorrow into strength', as is the situation with poor 'massacre widows'.

Poor women though not liberated from material deprivation have been able to radically change their life conditions. Seen from a Maslowian perspective of liberation (Chapter- 2) the inclusive agenda of mobilisation in Jahanabad has addressed first four levels of 'hierarchies of human needs': the physiological (need for food, cloth and shelter), the safety (a safe and secure social environment to live in), the love, and the self-esteem, in their local contexts. And, interestingly, the mobilisation has most succeeded in attaining the fourth hierarchy of need, the 'self-esteem'. It is this precise gain, which overlaps the other essential material gains. The struggle for survival is very hard; yet, the 'esteem' is very high. Just converse applies to the richer women, for whom material conditions are comfortable nevertheless self-esteem is very low.

Mobilisation thus liberates the exploited and oppressed class and also gender within its representative class. The richer women lose in terms of both as class and as gender in the process of mobilisation if seen in the backdrop of its derivative impact on them. The poorer women emerge as gainers in both terms. Material problems are still pervasive but power-sharing is gained and self-esteem is attained. The encouraging pointer is increasing concern for development as it is now well recognised that answer to survival question cannot be solved only through militant engagement with politics of change. The engagement of the WO's with development issues is further evidence to this. The spate of violence and spirit of reconstruction is going simultaneous in this vivid site of practice of Marxist-feminist perspective evolving from the grassroots experience. Engagement with a reconstruction approach is carving out space gradually and with a localisation paradigm shift that allows a poor women's view to life, sustenance, production, and reproduction to prevail. This view is more inclusive and holistic.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **ARGUING FOR A WOMEN'S WORLDVIEW: TOWARDS A FRESH BEGINNING**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

While initiating a discourse about women liberation, I have stated that neither seclusion nor narcissism is liberating. Liberation lies in free communication between the genders. This whole research exploration leads to conclude that market opportunities have acted as a powerful catalyst for change in gender relations. Another appropriate way of stating this fact is, market avenues have helped in relaxing gender constraints and in opening up newer and better means for communication between the genders in the changing contexts of structural transformation. The overall process of structural transformation instigated through the market forces has helped women carve out fresh space for themselves in productive as well as in reproductive regimes. They have established their stake stronger than before in both the regimes. Relaxing of the gender constraints implies relaxing of the space for communication between the genders. Mobilisation, the other catalyst for change has facilitated communication between the genders and defends, rather more strongly, the argument that liberation lies in free communication between the genders.

This is just a brief introduction to the central theme of this study, i.e. women liberation has powerful potential to emerge as an alternative process to human liberation; that development is one route to this process and movement is the other; that market is one catalyst to accelerate this process and mobilisation is the other. This study has attempted to explore a feminine route to human liberation and in the end, offers powerful insights and vision for a distinct feminist perspective in shaping, which I term as the "Women's Worldview". The twin catalysts of market and mobilisation are examined as accelerators to the processes that create material conditions for evolving of this perspective. This concluding chapter speaks about how far has this exploration proved to be a worthwhile attempt. And, opens up some fresh areas of exploration too. In this way, this conclusion is conclusion yet a fresh beginning as well!

## 2. RESTATEMENT OF THE MAIN ARGUMENTS

This study provides strong empirical evidence to the main argument that women liberation has strong potential to culminate into an alternative process to human liberation. An investigation into the diverse nature of changes in gender relations that has taken place simultaneously with structural transformation in village Tikapatti, the main empirical site of this study, leads to conclude that market has acted as a powerful catalyst in accelerating these processes (of change). The case of Tikapatti also offers powerful insights into the exploration of a feminine route to women liberation. While theoretical discourse around main argument presented (in Part - I) offers diverse insights for this exploration, particularly in Indian context, the empirical evidence and their analysis (Parts - III) authenticate these insights. The evidence from Tikapatti provides strong basis for arguing in favour of feminisation of productive regime (Chapter-8) and growing stake of women in reproductive regime (Chapter - 9). The market-infused development, in this village, is giving way to a feminine regime of production vis-à-vis a masculine one. Women in various capacities and multifarious roles as labourer, producer, manager and farm supervisor are active in production processes and (re) discovering their strength in food farming. This indicates towards a process that may aptly be described as 'feminisation of food sector'.

The case of Tikapatti clearly suggests that market forces have a decisive impact on women's economic activities. The gender implications of structural change and market behaviour are complex. Markets, on many occasions, relax gender constraints and gender, on many occasions, constrains market options for women. Some of the distinct forms and nature of 'women liberation' evolving through complex interactive processes between market forces and gender behaviour are traced via case studies (Chapter - 10). The locations of such forms and nature of liberating womancy are their households, families, groups and community. The gender division of labour and other factors of production suggest an informal-formal dialectical relationship between the genders. This challenges the very concept of a conventional inside-outside dichotomy that is often used for characterising gender division of labour in Indian context.

Evidence from Tikapatti helps discover some newer forms and types of households. It is the nature and forms of gender relations existing between a husband and a wife in nuclear families (and between men and women in different relationship network, in joint families) and not just the ownership of the resources that provide a more authentic basis for

categorization of a household. Women, though less successful in owning the resources have often proved to be more successful in accessing and managing them. Their 'invisibility', at many occasions, proved to be more powerful than their visibility. The case of Tikapatti cuts across the strict boundaries of household typologies. For instance, the most talked about "female headed household" category is not restricted to poor households alone. And, also a household may be a 'female-headed' even if a man is present. Yet it is the resource-position of a family that determines the strength and weakness of a female-headed household. Nevertheless, a poor household with a lone female with children emerges as the most vulnerable household. The message that this study conveys is - a strait-jacketed conceptualization in a social science research endeavour may lead to blatant generalisations. Therefore, a more dynamic and liberal approach to conceptualization is required.

The evidence from Jahanabad, in central Bihar, suggests that mobilisation has acted as another powerful catalyst in accelerating the process of change in gender relations, though in a different way. The gender consciousness has carved out significant space in course of radical mobilisation in Jahanabad. It is interesting to observe (Chapter – 11) a complex interaction between gender and class in the course of mobilisation and after. Among the poor, congruence between class and gender is revealing during mobilisation. In spite of all hardships, the sense of togetherness between the genders in struggle against class and gender exploitation is strengthening and communicative. The situation for middle class and rich women is not similar. While class and gender congruence, in retaliation, may be revealing during 'tug of war', class often dictates gender, if a 'massacre widow' wishes a life of her own choice; class makes political 'use' of gender during elections (Chapter – 11: 6); and, class compels gender to form a 'women's armed squad'<sup>1</sup> to combat radical mobilisers. Class dictates gender among rich and resourceful and divides women sharply leaving no scope for communication between a poor and a rich (woman).

The fact that continuation of this violent situation since long has affected women (rich and poor both) worst - is gradually recognised by a section of poor and rich (women) both, separately. Though located in different class matrixes women appear to have started thinking against the 'violent' tug of war (between classes). It is too early to say that gender-solidarity against 'violence' is gaining ground in Jahanabad. Yet a consensus in favour of 'construction' (as against destruction perpetrated by violent clashes between radical mobilisers and private armies), is carving out space among rich and poor both. The baffling question before the mobilisers is - without a reconstruction programme (for the

society) mobilisation often reaches to a plateau. Therefore, an essential need for engagement with a reconstruction approach that cannot exclude 'development' is gradually catching up their minds too.

The growing concern for 'development' itself indicates a radical shift in the strategy of the radical left politics for change. The Naxalite form of mass mobilization basing on the radical Marxist ideology believes in overthrowing of the state power and aims at reconstituting of the society according to a radical set of principles. The present form and nature of development, in this scheme of thinking, obviously acquires no place as it is seen as anti-poor and therefore, anti-people. The irony of the situation in Bihar is a total lack of development mainly due to gobbling up of huge fund earmarked for development by the politician-bureaucrat-contractor nexus. While, the poor have to face acute survival problems, the richness in the countryside is no more associated with farming, because farming is reduced to be a venture that runs in loss due to completely insensitive government support system from the level of infra-structural provisions to marketing management. And, in this situation, the radical mobilisers see gobbling up of huge development fund by the politician-bureaucratic-contractor nexus of which the local rural elite too is a part, as continuation of the same feudal process of snatching away of the resources that belongs to poor and outcaste. The other face of the situation is – if production does not generate profit how can a demand for increased wage is possible to satisfy? If nothing significant is available for redistribution, how long struggle for redistribution is possible to carry on? How long poor, with empty stomach, can carry on their struggle for redistribution of resources, that too, in a situation of either non-availability or non-feasibility of resources? Struggle against bureaucratic feudal nexus, therefore, is recognized as the seriously felt 'need' by the radical mobilisers. The radical overthrow of the state power is a dream too far to realize and a process of gradual transformation of the society along democratic lines is possible to continue through the next stage of struggle for reconstruction via development. The particular engagement of the WOs with the question of development (Chapter – 11:4) and mobilisation of poor women and men both against 'detrimentals' of development, i.e. the 'Bureaucratic feudalism' (Chapter – 5:6) may be seen and explained as an indication towards a feminisation of the process of mobilisation itself.

The theoretical discussion (Chapter - 2) leads to conclude that amidst sharp contradictions between developmentalist and movementalist feminist positions, the gender perspective offers an alternative route to women liberation. This is neither conformist nor revolutionary.



To my understanding this argues for making use of bourgeois contradictions that essentially exist in International Development Bureaucracy and its local extensions in developing countries. This route is possible to create through a strategy of creating contradictory pressures within development agencies. The view is to make strategic use of these contradictions to create space for a feminist development agenda. This agenda also incorporates feminisation of the institutions.

In India, the common locus from where all feminist streams articulate the category of woman is 'power', i.e. they speak from a position of strength (Chapter – 3 and 4). It is the over-arching 'feminine' which now appears to be culminating into, what I term as, the 'Women's Worldview'. This Women's Worldview appears to be carving out some space in Tikapatti village, where male migration (across the classes in different ways, forms and periodicity) offers 'escape route' from a traditional gender construct for women and market forces offer liberating opportunities for reconstructing gender relations. This Women's Worldview also appears to carve out some space in Jahanabad, where mobilization offers 'struggle route' to liberation for poor women, though its impact on middle class and rich women is also visible. For instance, out siding of women from middle and rich peasant families is one such significant impact of mobilisation. I need to be cautious about making a generalisation, therefore, I do not argue that the case of Tikapatti village represents north Bihar and similarly, the empirical evidence from Jahanabad represents the central Bihar region. As stated in Chapter Six, Tikapatti is not a standard village. This instead is a model village. Therefore, it is safer to conclude that in a similar (to Tikapatti) dominant social, cultural and economic environment, wherever available in north Bihar, it is possible to explore 'escape route' to women liberation. Some villages in Muzaffarpur district may be referred to, for instance. And, a replication of the case of Jahanabad, with some local variations, is even more confidently possible to explore in those regions of central Bihar where sustained radical mobilisation has taken place. Bhojpur district may be referred to, for instance.

This Women's Worldview (WWV) may allow a poor woman's view to life, sustenance, production and reproduction to prevail. This worldview is inclusive, holistic and feminine, in nature. This worldview does not argue for gender-seclusion. This neither supports gender-neutrality nor proceeds towards de-genderisation of thoughts, actions and strategies for change. This Women's Worldview can reveal the facts, truths, concepts, ideas, propositions, assumptions and so on seen, experienced, felt, and realised from women's eyes. This worldview is women's perception of world. This is not a contradictory (to men's

world) vision. This, instead aims at complementing and correcting the 'falsified' notions of not only the gender relations but of the whole set of ideas and exercises that relate to human well being, in general. The existing human worldview is reduced to the Bruner's (1983) concept of the 'basic story<sup>2</sup>'. This Women's Worldview can make this 'story' complete.

### **3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARGUMENTS**

The lead message that this study convey about the twin routes to women liberation confronts and transcends some of the established positions. First, that market forces adversely affect all women and poor women, in particular. This thesis, by contrast, argues that market confers differential advantage on women located in different classes. Second, in sharp contrast to the established Marxist-feminist perspective that views 'gender' as class-divisive and allows subsuming of the gender by class, this thesis argues that class mobilisation helps grow gender consciousness and gender and class congruence, (instead of contradiction) is possible to emerge in the course of mobilisation against class and gender, both the forms of oppression.

The significance of these arguments is global as well as local. These arguments are relevant scholastically as well as in the arena of social action. This study necessitates a critique to the gender perspective (3.1.1) and seeks to argue for a feminine vision (3.1.2). This also justifies the relevance of the gender perspective as a workable strategy (3.2.1), as a process towards feminisation of development agenda. The significance and relevance of this critique and potential strategic role of gender perspective in feminising of the development agenda is applicable to all developing countries including India and with special reference to Bihar where people's initiatives provide the ultimate hope.

#### **3.1 The Scholastic**

How far is this empirical analysis a witness to the Radical-feminist position, WID position, Gender position, Marxist-feminist position, Eco-feminist position or a Feminine principal position? And, where does this scenario of women liberation stand within the Maslowian scheme (Chapter - 1) of human liberation? The scholastic significance of this study lies in logical conclusions on these final quarries.

A diverse analysis of the 'escape', i.e. market route to women liberation (Part - III) leads to

argue that women 'actors' with varying degrees demonstrate their capability to 'assert'. They not only 'recognise' their conspicuous presence but let the men also recognise the same. Their inclination towards 'visibility' has remarkably increased. The analysis speaks much more beyond the 'recognition', 'assertiveness' and 'visibility' to explain and illustrate the meaning and nature of women liberation through market options.

Market forces confer differential advantage on women located in different classes. Market opportunities liberate rich and resourceful women most. The radical and WID positions find pronounced expression among upwardly mobile middle class women. Tikapatti village is a bold witness to the radical feminist position where patriarchies face challenge from both the genders. This site is a vocal witness to the WID position as the 'out siding' of women across those classes where they usually remained 'in sided' before has conspicuous presence. However, reversal of this process, i.e. 'in siding' of men is rare to find.

To put it simply in the Maslowian scheme, the forms of liberation that the upwardly mobile middle class women represent touch the fourth level of the hierarchy, i.e. the self-esteem. The liberating potential of the market, thus can be said to be touching the fourth higher level. This transcends the three lower levels of 'physiological', 'security' and 'love' needs that represent the basic needs of human life and without these fourth level cannot be attained. It is obvious that the rich and middle classes are not deprived of these three hierarchies of human needs.

The market opportunities, however, confer little advantage to poor. Therefore, potential for liberation from the first three levels gets restricted via markets. In contrast to the normal findings that the market opportunities confer no advantage to poor and women and act adverse to them, the findings of this study suggest that the forces of market operate within the existing institutional set up and market is resource-relative. Therefore, it confers less advantage to those poor in resources and more to those rich in resources. The role of market forces as a catalyst for change could best be explained in terms of what I would call the 'precipitating of the crisis' that enforces women emerge out of the 'myth' of powerlessness that imbues their psychology.

Market forces precipitate crisis in distinct ways for rich and poor both and, in turn, offer new opportunities for recognising their actual worth. If farm-supervision and food farming is becoming a female domain, it is 'painful' for women as it increases their responsibilities, yet it is liberating because it offers them act and occupy an important place in the food

production system, which they never had before. Similarly, if depressed labour markets at home create survival crisis for the poor, the out migration offers new opportunities. This results in feminisation of the local labour market and added responsibility on women for managing their households at their own. This allows more space for manoeuvre to them. This is painful, yet liberating. True the emotional deprivation is felt deep and non-economic costs are heavy but the basic question of 'survival' becomes the first thing. Women have to struggle whether they are farm-supervisors located in rich families or poor labourer vulnerably placed in female-headed households. Gender unites here and class divides.

Tikapatti is a weaker site for the Marxist-feminist position, as class does not always subsume gender. Class-consciousness, in this class divided society is diverted towards class cohesion through social networking. Gender consciousness does not come in sharp conflict with class-consciousness, as both the genders have to struggle in separate arenas (at home and away in labour markets) in order to survive.

Evidence from Tikapatti most vigorously demonstrates that this case is the boldest witness to Eco-feminist and Feminine Principle positions. There exists a 'feminine' sector of farming basically producing for sustenance vis-à-vis a 'masculine' sector of farming basically producing for the market. There exists a conspicuous presence of an 'informal regime' managed and dominated by women vis-à-vis a 'formal regime' dominated and controlled by men. Market opportunities have created this sharp division between the formal and informal and to a fair extent, have mitigated the gap between the traditional dichotomised inside-outside feminine-masculine regimes. This setting leads to strongly argue in favour of a preference for the 'informal-formal dialectics', as a better analytical device over the hitherto persuaded 'inside-outside dichotomy' as the dominant analytical tool to comprehend and analyse gender relations in Indian context. The informal regime, though facing onslaught from the market (-infused) development, yet without going into much direct conflict with the latter appears to be creating a more enduring, sustainable and culturally acceptable 'feminine production system'.

The feminine farming, feminine regime of work, power and decision making, all make strong case for a 'feminine vision' in shaping and gradually evolving under the pressure of the market-infused patriarchal mode of development. Therefore, it is argued that Tikapatti provides concrete evidence for emergence of the contours of Women's Worldview as a distinct local model of feminist perspective.

A diverse analysis of the 'struggle' route to women liberation (Chapter - 10) suggests that Jahanabad is a stronger site for the Marxist-feminist position, though it transcends the traditional tenets of this position that views women primarily as a class and perceives gender exploitation as embedded in class (and caste) exploitation. The culmination of the gender issue into the class issue is a unique path that the radical mobilisation, in its three-decade course, has discovered. The reason is - the issue of 'dignity' often associated with the poor and the outcaste, in general and women of this class, in particular, has received significant attention. Gender and class are more in continuity. While class solidarity does not always subsume gender, gender solidarity does not transcend class.

Seen from the Maslowian perspective, the inclusive agenda of mobilisation in Jahanabad has addressed the first four levels of 'hierarchies of human needs' in their local contexts. And, mobilisation has succeeded most in attainment of the fourth hierarchy of need, the 'self-esteem'. The struggle for survival is very hard, yet the esteem is very high. Converse applies to richer women, for whom material conditions are comfortable, nevertheless self-esteem is very low.

In central Bihar, the Marxist-feminist position, in course of practice, appears to have developed beyond its conformist determinism of the traditional Marxist pronouncement that women must wait for the abolition of the existing system for the resolution of the gender questions. And, to some extent, this also provides answer to the associated question that how women need to go in the meantime, once they are aware of oppression and subordination. This satisfies the socialist-feminist position that argues that women must act for their own emancipation, yet transcends the limitations of the socialist-feminist perspective. Rowbotham (1998) posits that the social emancipation of all will be based on the self-emancipation of all the groups of society. She suggests agitation (feminist) in working class neighbourhood. While Jahanabad is not a site for the 'working class neighbourhood', feminist agitation with poor peasantry and agricultural labour class is a reality.

It is significant that 'escape' and 'struggle' routes to women liberation, finally, appear to go beyond the level of conformity with the established feminist perspectives and offer something different that is emerging from the ground in north and central Bihar. The contours of 'feminine vision' in Tikapatti and continuity between class and gender, often crystallized as class-gender congruence on critical occasions in Jahanabad, both have strong potential to culminate into a distinct model of feminist ideas and actions (4.2).

While mainstream development is centrally concerned with liberation from material deprivation that inhibits the satisfaction of the 'lower levels' of human needs, the agenda of women liberation movement ranges from material to cultural, from survival to self-esteem, from deprivation to recognition, and from 'lower' to 'higher' levels of human needs. It is ironical that market as the vehicle of development runs fast towards those who do not suffer from material deprivation! And, converse applies when mobilisation due to non-development, fails to realise economic gains. Rich women gain self-esteem via market and poor women gain self-esteem via mobilisation.

Dreze and Sen (1996) argue that the agency of women as a 'force for change' has remained one of the neglected aspects of development literature. It is encouraging that the International development community now recognises the agency of women as a 'force for change'. Theoretical underpinnings for 'gendered' development with market as its 'prime mover' and empowerment as its 'main facilitator' is provided by the gender perspective.

Agarwal (1998) argues that the possibilities of gender-specific differences in interests and preferences within a bargaining framework of analysis opens up some space for recognising that resources in women's hands could promote not only gender justice but also welfare and efficiency. Agarwal (ibid) appears to be even more enthusiastic, when she argues that women can have common gender interests, which in particular contexts, could outweigh divisive class / caste interests. This can also open up the possibilities of broad based collective action by women for changing the existing gendered structures.

What appears to be missing in this whole scheme of thought is, that 'gendered' development efforts and collective action both, in absence of an alternative feminine vision for development, would end up in perpetuating the same 'masculine' and 'patriarchal' route to development, which has been persuasively adopted since decades with some variations in forms (under the pressure of the 'official feminism') but with no qualitative change in the substance of its paradigmatic philosophy. This route to development is subsuming and not liberating. To substantiate this argument, I need to present a brief critique of the gender perspective.

### **3.1.1 Critique of Gender Perspective**

The Gender perspective argues that route to women liberation is 'bargaining' between the

genders. This implies 'market spirit' in intimate nature and forms of relationship between the genders. While infusion of 'market spirit' and bargaining in the claiming (for entitlement) process can help women access some material resources and carve out some space for themselves, this is likely to lead to a further erosion of human values in the intimate arena of relationships. This would not bring about a qualitative change in relationships between the genders. The gender perspective recommends feminisation of institutions without a 'feminine' vision. A qualitative difference between 'womanisation' and 'feminisation' of the institution has to be made here. Womanisation may succeed in bringing in some more women in development policies and practices, but cannot lead to a transformation of the 'culture' of the existing institutions, which is predominantly masculine and patriarchal. Culture is a 'way of life' that exists in a group. It is different from the 'life style', which may characterize the particular manner in which individuals lead their lives. Gender perspective can change life style of some individuals but with these weaknesses cannot change the patriarchal culture of the society. For changing this culture of the society, a 'feminine vision' is required.

Liberation lies in fusion and not in 'subsumption' and for this, female gender has to explore and strengthen her own 'self'. The gender perspective argues for women's stake and presumably, for a woman's own 'self' thereby, but ignores biology and psychology. It is not just sociology that is the whole and inclusive - sociological determinism appears to dictate this perspective.

Gender perspective, therefore, has to redefine 'feminisation'. For this, the gender perspective needs to define the 'feminine'. This would necessitate a retreat from the 'sociological determinism', which this perspective suffers from. Greer (2000) argues that there has been a tendency to play down the possible role of biology in accounting for psychological differences between men and women. For the first time, she continues, "we have evidence about the location of a gene that plays a part, challenging the prevailing belief that gender differences are largely culturally determined (Greer, 2000:370)." The latest scientific pool of research demonstrates (Angier, 1999) that male and female are distinct sexes, therefore, differences in gender are not just a 'social construct'. The distinction between the sex and the gender, as Greer (ibid: 369) argues, is rather like the one to be found between the genotype, which is what is written in the DNA, and the phenotype, which is how that immense text is quoted in actuality. The potential of the genotype is enormous! Gender perspective has to face challenge from this 'enormous' potential of the genotype. These serious limitations severely restrict the growth of the

gender perspective. This, however, does not undermine the relevance of the gender perspective in the arena of the social action, because this perspective offers a workable strategy for gradual transformation (see 4.2 below).

### **3.1. 2 Arguing in Favour of The Feminine**

This whole research endeavour argues in favour of 'feminine'. By the term 'feminine', here I do not mean the feminine gender per se. This means feminine nature and ways of action, a feminine 'vision'. Arguing in favour of a 'feminine vision' in India, at a point of time, when the feminists in the West are on the way to drop feminism for 'femaliesm' (Angier, 1999) deserves attention. Greer's recognition that after proclaiming for women's liberation, the feminists of the 1970s finally settled for equality (with men) and, "equality is cruel to women because it requires them to duplicate behaviours that they find profoundly alien and disturbing (Greer, 2000:398)", is a statement - bold and revealing. Greer's literary concern for global feminism leads her to state further, "If equality means entitlement to an equal share of the profits of economic tyranny, it is irreconcilable with liberation. Freedom in an unfree world is merely licence to exploit (Greer (2000:8))."

The recognition that (women) liberation does not lie in assimilation of the genders but in asserting difference between them is growing among all shades / variants of the feminist perspectives. Challenging the basic tenets of the Marxist-feminist position that argues for subsuming of gender by the class, Krishnaraj (1996) advocates for recognising gender as an organising principle<sup>3</sup> that structures both the relations of production and relations of reproduction, to make a more realistic understanding of class. This assertion argues for establishing difference between the genders as well as for assigning 'gender' an equal status vis-à-vis class.

Jain (1996) argues that there is a need to build philosophies and theories that confirm this 'difference'. This basis of identity and recycling of it into the movement would transcend 'gender' and move towards the feminine culture and ethics. What is the feminine culture and ethics? Avoiding conflict, pre-empting injustice, strong when it comes to basic needs for the family, learning through doing, tentative, consulting, sharing, caring, undoing hierarchies and rebuilding informality are some aspects of feminine ethics - Jain (1996) suggests.

Liberation lies in endowing the 'difference' between the genders with dignity and prestige,



and insisting on it as condition of self-definition and self-determination. Women must indeed search within themselves if they are to achieve liberation. They need to explore their own vision, construct their own philosophy, principles and ethics. Why? The answer to this question lies in ocean of grief and sorrow, in which women across the world are drowned. The answer to this question lies in mountains of responsibilities that keep the soldiers of women aching with burden. And, answer lies in their irresistible desire to conserve and sustained efforts to nurture the family; they have to upkeep in absence of men. The point seeks some explanation.

One of the main events of the last quarter of the 20th century has been the worldwide feminisation of poverty, which now hardly needs any supportive evidence for its authentication. India is no exception to this event. Tikapatti village provides further evidence for a localised version of this event. Furthermore, as the extended family has crumbled under the pressure of urbanisation, increasing landlessness and economic change, men, are no longer constrained by their elders to live as responsible husbands and fathers and have backed away from women and children (Greer, 2000:412). This situation, too, is no more an exception in Indian rural setting. The global situation is no better either.

A quarter of all the families in the world is headed by a lone female. In North America, Europe and North Africa the proportion of the female-headed family is about a fifth, and rising steeply. In the Caribbean, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, it is about a third, and rising<sup>4</sup>. Taylor (1994:4) argues that this phenomenon is not one of 'increase in single motherhood, but the decline in responsible fatherhood around the world'. India is no exception to this. Though percentage of the female-headed families (of the all families) in India is not available, the alarming pace of male migration from the backward regions is revealing enough of the phenomenon of 'irresponsible' husbandhood, fatherhood, and subsequent feminisation of poverty. The situation is grave in rural setting. Wherever they are, fatherless families represent the poorest section of society. Even in the United States, the richest nation in the world, the income of the single-parent family is one-third that of the couple family. The situation in India and other developing countries can well be understood.

In Tikapatti village, a group of male migrants have succeeded in elevating the economic status of their families back home. Rodgers's (2001) findings during 1999 in the same region also authenticate this positive trend. The role of responsible husbands, fathers, and

sons cannot be undermined in this process. However, such 'responsible' husbands and fathers are not the common sight in India and in Bihar, either.

What message does this overall global scenario of feminisation of poverty and steeply rising percentage of female-headed families convey for the feminist theorists engaged in ideological battles? The message is: a feminism that does not address this situation with a radical orientation that keeps women and children at the centre stage in constructing its philosophy, in formulating its principles, and in creating a paradigm for development is, to use Germaine Greer's term, 'ostrich' feminism. In a grave situation of 'irresponsible' masculinity and 'over-responsible' femininity, the feminine must prevail (see 4 below).

" For thirty years we have tried to run the feminist movement on women's rage but it was never present in sufficient quantities to drive us forward. If we can find ways of harvesting the energy in women's 'oceanic grief' we shall move mountains (Greer, 2000: 228, inverted mine)."

### **3. 2 The Social Action**

This study offers distinct insights for social action in a state like Bihar that is caught up in a situation of non-development and economic stagnation. The gobbling up of development fund by the politician-bureaucratic-contractor nexus, money-making tendencies prevailing in the NGO sector that represents another agency for development, and phenomenon of un-utilisation of funds every year, indicating a total lack of initiative for development puts Bihar in a peculiar position on the development map. The only hope appears to be imbued in people's initiatives, which often lies within political, ideological boundaries and also transcends all the boundaries. In spite of serious limitations (3.1.1), the gender perspective, even in such a situation appears to have good potential for social action.

#### **3.2.1 Gender Perspective: A Workable Strategy**

The grassroots development movements offer insights on how women and development could be linked (Kalegaonkar, 1997; Wignaraja, 1996). Drawing on principles of participation and conscientisation, it argues that development is the self-realised aspirations of people who are the intended beneficiaries. The grassroots methodology focuses on 'enabling' instead of 'provisioning' and its framework is based on minimal outside intervention (Berkey, 1993:48) and total ownership of the development

process by women. The 'process' is the key. This understanding of development comes into conflict with the ideas of those streams of feminism, which view women's development inextricably tied to women's liberation from patriarchal institutions (Kalegaonkar, 1997).

I have stated earlier (3) that amidst sharp contradictions between the developmentalist and the movementalist feminist positions, the gender perspective offers an alternative route to women liberation. This perspective has strong potential to become a workable strategy, to become a 'process' towards the 'feminisation' of development agenda. Molyneux's (1985:233) concept of practical gender needs (PGN) and strategic gender needs (SGN) is relevant here to explain the strategic role that gender perspective can play. Molyneux argues that PGN emerges from the concrete conditions of women's positioning within the gender division of labour, from their existing situation and has immediate relevance to their lives. SGN is derived from the subordination of women as witnessed in the three spheres of responsibility - home, economy and community. SGN finds basis in a vision of more equitable social arrangements and in this way, it poses direct challenge to the gender-based division of labour. It is PGN that is satisfied under the guise of 'development' and it does not promote the feminist agenda and demand for a reconfiguration of gender roles in society.

The present phase of development with its theoretical underpinnings provided by the gender perspective aims at promoting the feminist demand for a reconfiguration of gender roles in society. Our concern for development, at this stage, is with the vast populace suffering material deprivation. The reality of poor women's lives makes them preoccupied with immediate concerns. The inappropriate and insensitive nature of existing formal institutions vis-à-vis the needs to the rural poor women (Wignaraja, 1985; 1996) further discourages their interest in pursuing SGN. This particularly applies to poor women (and men) of Bihar, who are facing crisis not only from the insensitive state support system but also due to collapse of some of the state-run institutions essential for important spheres of human life. Another deterrent to adopting SGN agenda are the 'cultural' factors and local conditions that prevent women from according primacy to gender concerns and / or that lead them opt for subordinating gender interests to class, racial, caste, religious identities. Beyond the common history of gender oppression, women's identities are informed by other, more context-specific experiences (Young, 1988). It is not surprising that in such a context poor women usually opt for a PGN agenda instead of a SGN.

Gendered development assigns crucial importance to empowerment and gaining

awareness of one's capabilities. This can facilitate the emergence of a PGN agenda. Following this, it may be women's prerogative to decide the nature of the changes they wish to undertake. After satisfying the basic needs, women may find space and opportunity to envisage a more radical, i.e. strategic needs oriented agenda. Looking at the issue from a pragmatic viewpoint, sequencing of the order in which needs are fulfilled is feasible and probably easier to accept for women and their social environment, in lieu of revolutionary change - if it is introduced without preparing any ground. The PGN agenda can help preparing ground for a radical change. The satisfaction of PGN can serve as 'process' to SGN, in this context. This sequencing of the order has conformity with the Maslowian scheme of 'hierarchies of human needs' (Chapter – 2).

If gender perspective is seen as analogous to the PGN and 'feminine vision' to the SGN, it can safely be concluded that the former has strong potential to become a workable strategy; a 'process' towards feminisation, in lieu of womanisation of development agenda. Since the 'process', not the 'provision' is the key, this strategy could play crucial role in sensitising development agents to gender issues. This could help diminish patriarchal bias frequently revealed even in best-intended actions.

### **3.2.2 Development Agents and People's Initiative**

Bihar is experiencing 'militant disengagement' since decades just refusing to have any truce with development efforts - this is one face of the state. The other face is acute antipathy from development community itself, which treats Bihar as a chronic case of 'non-development'. The prime reason why people refuse to have any truce with development is lack of serious development efforts. The term development itself has proved to be a 'hoax' in this state. The state apparatus and the NGOs - both the agents of development - are either busy in gobbling up of development fund or making money out of foreign funding, obviously given for development activities. A maximum of twenty to twenty-five percent of the total development fund is utilized in this state, though a concrete figure is not possible to obtain. One of the important trends of development activity in Bihar is 'inactivity' to the level of 'un-utilization' of development fund worth multi-million of rupees that returns back to the central government and other agencies every year. In such a bleak situation, it is the people's initiative alone that provides some source of aspiration.

I refer to the term 'people's initiative' here in a rather unconventional term. In spite of such a bleak performance, it is the initiative, assertion, and pressure of the local populace in

certain areas that compels NGOs to work and the local state machinery to act. At many places, people of the certain region have managed to solve the problems via community management and yet, at many places through collectives. The main catalyst in all such people's initiatives is mobilisation of different shades and colours. The prime mover is 'consciousness' for pro-people action. The issue of social action in Bihar, therefore, has to address neither state nor NGOs per se, i.e. the existing institutions and agents for development, but to such people with heightened consciousness and with capability for taking initiatives, exerting pressure on the institutions and agencies. Mobilisation, under these conditions has potential to become an input for development.

The 'petty production mode' thesis (Chapter - 4.6) has strong potential to argue in favour of a farming system, of which women are the backbone. This thesis is applicable not only to the case of Jahanabad, but even more aptly, to the feminine productive regime of Tikapatti as well. A more comprehensive study around this theme is required to ascertain this argument. This thesis allows more scope for social action as well. In Bihar, it is the small and middle peasant households involving hard family labour that grow the substantial part of food for consumption and market. Mobilisation against 'bureaucratic feudalism' and for development would necessitate inclusion of women from diverse social groups - poor, small and middle peasant households. The potential for social action would expand with their expanded inclusion. This has been severely restricted with a conventional approach to address poor women as a 'category'. A bargaining framework analysis, as Agarwal (1998) argues, could outweigh divisive class / caste interests and can open up the possibilities of broad based collective action by women for changing the existing gendered structures. Bihar may become a potential site for this experiment.

Mobilisation increases women's involvement in production and sustenance work, because full time activist men can hardly afford to take up full-fledged cultivation. An avalanche of such stories are scattered in central Bihar that speak about how a family of an activist man has been run by the woman and how complex has been the implications of his involvement in radical politics for the whole family. A household, in this situation becomes female managed even if a man is present. Moreover, central Bihar is a region, where small-size holdings are cultivated by middle, poor and petty peasants. Obviously, central Bihar is a stronger site for 'petty production mode' thesis. This opens up increasing scope for mobilisation against non-development as well as for development with a focus on women. The radical mobilisers, after seizing government land and / or poor peasant's land from the land-grabbers often introduce collective farming and management system. In

such a collective, family, instead of man is considered to be the unit. Nevertheless, women are subsumed under 'family' as a unit. An understanding of the gender framework analysis and gendered development practice would help them emerge out of this 'subsuming'. This might create a temporary nature of contradiction between class and gender but given the fact that there has remained a tendency of class-gender continuity and congruence, this contradiction will not be much difficult to resolve. Moreover, in a collective farming venture, even a bargaining framework would discourage the individual sense of proprietary.

The official efforts to put the global gender agenda into practice continue apace in India. Some of its reflections are creation of institutions headed and run by women for women. With declaration of the year 2001 as the 'year for women empowerment' Women's Commission, Women Development Corporation, Women Employment Exchange are created in Bihar too. These institutions are headed and run either by women politicians affiliated to the ruling political parties or by women bureaucrats or by both. The overall functioning and performance of these institutions at the center as well as in different states (wherever they exist) compels one to raise questions about the similar masculine and patriarchal culture of functioning that usually inflicts other institutions. The situation in Bihar too is not expected to be different. That the culture of the functioning of these institutions cannot change even if these are run by women instead of men. Atrocities on women in India increased during Indira Gandhi regime. She was best exemplified as the "single 'man' in her manned cabinet"! Similarly, atrocities and crime against women is touching alarming height in Bihar in a woman chief minister's regime. Even more striking are the reports from Kerala, where crime and violence against women are on the increase. This situation leads one to be emphatic about the position that masculinity and patriarchy are ingrained in culture and not just embodied in gender. Need for a change in violent, aggressive, masculinist and patriarchal culture can well be understood in this situation. Recognition for a feminine consciousness, vision and culture against this social, political and administrative environment appears to be imperative.

#### **4. THE FEMININE, THE FEMININE VISION, THE WOMEN'S WORLDVIEW**

The quest for a feminine vision, on the basis of which a Women's Worldview is possible to create, seeks an exploration into what the feminine does mean. And, alternatively, what the masculine does mean too. Asserting of the 'differences' is required. This also generates debate about sex and gender. While sex is perceived as purely biological

construct, gender is described as a social and cultural construct. Another point of enquiry may be about 'nature' that is missing in sex and gender scheme of thinking. It appears that biology is created by the nature and nature mediates between biology and culture. Therefore, debate has to be generated around specie (the natural creation), sex (the biological construct) and gender (the cultural construct). Nature is often subsumed by biology and at occasions, referred to as environment, and / or at best, referred to as synonymous to biology. For instance, Greer (2000) explains the common feminist understanding of masculinity and femininity as quoted below:

" Masculinity is to maleness as femininity is to femaleness. That is to say that maleness is the natural (biological) condition, the sex if you like, and masculinity is the **cultural** construct, the gender....(Greer, 2000:369) emphasis mine."

If we agree that femininity and masculinity are cultural constructs and these have nothing to do with nature and biology, then the meaning and traits of femininity and masculinity would obviously vary by cultures. That is to say femininity and masculinity as perceived in the West could not necessarily be the same as in Indian societies; nor indeed in other parts of the world. This is only partially true. It can also be argued that historical roles of both genders in various societies have remained remarkably similar. For instance, women involved in reproduction, normally located inside home and in close vicinity and men engaged in production to facilitate reproduction, wandering outside home in distant ventures. These simple gender role models have undergone various changes with the advent of capitalism, the epicentre of which has been the West. It is this era that provides basis for gender to be recognised as the social-cultural construct. Therefore, I argue that femininity is derived from femaleness and in the same way, masculinity is from maleness, i.e. femininity and masculinity are basically natural and biological constructs. To remind Greer's words, '... the potential of the genotype is enormous and phenotype is the finite creature.... (Ibid: 369).'

Biology determines sex and psychology cannot be separated from biology, the role of which is not less significant in shaping the mindset of the sexes. Similarly, all cultures have been rooted in and shaped out of natural environment. The turning point in the history of the human societies have been the advent of the kind of science and technology that stood against the nature and in the process of conflict with nature predominantly relied on destruction of nature. Capitalist development, the epitome of masculinity, is erected on the mastery over nature. In this way masculinity of this era may be perceived as the construct

of a distinct kind of Western culture. The influence of this culture, like the influence of other dimensions of capitalist development, is also pronounced in other societies in the world.

Without going deeper into the scholastic discussion on nature, biology and culture for asserting 'differences' between a woman and a man, here I adhere to the point that certain traits identified by the feminist scholars in India and abroad may easily be categorised as feminine and as masculine. The findings of this study also authenticate these traits.

#### **4.1 The Feminine Strength**

The quiet strength, firm resistance, self-sacrifice, patience and endurance all these are feminine traits, according to Gandhi. I have argued elsewhere (Sinha, 1995) that Gandhian philosophy is basically a feminine philosophy as the non-violence; the basic tenet of the Gandhian philosophy is a feminine concept. Gandhi assigns feminine power a superior and central place vis-à-vis the aggressive violent masculine power. His preference for a feminine courage over masculine strength suggests a feminine vision.

Greer argues that ability to endure is women's strength; rage would fritter away the kinetic energy contained in that strength, which is women's advantage. Because we bend, we do not break (Greer, *ibid*: 421). She further recognises that intuition and sociability are feminine traits. Competitiveness, aggression, single mindedness, according to Greer, is some of the masculine traits. The notion that men are usually clear about what they want means that men formulate goals and pursue them in a single-minded manner. Conversely, the notion that women do not know what they want really means is that women are conscious of all kinds of conditions that affect the desirability of any particular option at a particular time and in particular circumstances. Masculinity is often identified with single-mindedness while femininity is usually with multiple-mindedness. Single-mindedness is normally assumed to be better than multiple-mindedness because single-mindedness leads on to success in a highly competitive world. Greer (*ibid*) argues that single-mindedness blinds an individual to the costs and risks associated with any course of action, therefore, it is mostly maladaptive. It produces hideously anti-social behaviours, from paedophile rings to waging war. Greer also argues that (*ibid*: 419) women's changeability is a value in itself, and also a necessary corrective to masculine rigidity. Adaptability is the insignia of the female; survival rather than victory is her success. In a disaster-prone world this is a characteristics too valuable to jettison.



Femininity is women's strength and not their weakness. Men are fragile and miserable beneath their muscular strength (Chapter – 2:4). The feminine strength is capable of life-conserving resource management. This strength, if transformed into organized resistance, is capable of sustaining struggle for sustenance for human kind (Shiva, 1989; Agarwal, 1989). This strength is capable of becoming self-conscious agency for social change. The grassroots struggles for environmental conservation, sustenance and survivals in India are a testimony to the above statement (Chapter – 3:4).

Gandhi (Kishwar, 1988), in 1920s and 30s argued that the qualities of courage, endurance and moral strength made women "natural" leaders. These qualities transformed into non-violence, as a deliberate strategy could put the mightiest weapons of organised violence and other masculine kinds of strength to shame, because it was easier for women to prove their courage and strength without resorting to violence. Gandhi also visualised women as active, self-conscious agents of social change. To him, women's entry into a movement for social change was a life preserving, humanising and disciplining force, which would prevent the movement from getting dissipated by senseless and self-destructive violence. The identification of manliness with aggression and violence was likely to lead humanity to destruction. Therefore, men, in his opinion, needed to emulate women's quiet strength and their resistance to injustice without resorting to violence.

Gandhi's version proved to be correct. This could be substantiated through Greer (2000), who at the end of the 20th century argues that men in constructing their elite, masculinist society contrives to be cruel to most men, all women and all children (Greer, 2000: 398). If women can see no future beyond joining this masculinist elite on its own terms, our civilisation will become more destructive than ever. Greer's masculinist elite is aggressiveness and violence personified!

That the aggressive and violent masculinity has already led the humanity to cruelty and destruction, this has been argued from an Eco-feminist position (Mies, 1987; Shiva, 1989; Agarwal, 1989 and many others) much before. However, Greer's argument deserves validity of a free thinker's assertion, which knows no bar of any 'ism', even not the 'feminism'.

#### **4. 2 The Feminine Ethics, Governance, Management**

Gandhi's preference for a certain kind of feminine courage over other kinds of masculine

strength reflects a vision that is one of a woman acting primarily as the best exemplars of a certain moral force in society. In a global situation, when humanity is already leading towards destruction, the recovery of feminine ethics (for existence) deserves attention. Jain (1996) recommends for a need to build philosophies, theories and culture around feminine ethics. Avoiding conflicts, pre-empting injustice, strong when it comes to basic needs for the family, learning through doing, tentative, consulting, sharing, caring, undoing hierarchies and rebuilding informality are some of the aspects of the feminine ethics (Jain, 1996). Femininity is not a limiting value but an expanding one and therefore, the struggle for femininity is a struggle for a certain basic principle of perceiving life, a philosophy of being; a philosophy that can serve not just women but all humans.

A feminine governance, Bhatta (1998) argues, does not mean having more IAS women or 'gender-sensitised' 'sahibs' (men officers) in a multiplex hierarchic bureaucracy. It refers to more equal, more caring, more effective and more responsive administering of development by the government. Therefore, a 'feminine governance' and a 'feminine bureaucracy' is qualitatively different from a 'womanised bureaucracy'.

Similarly, a businesswoman is different from a businessman. Business, to a woman is not equal to personal profit only. Having achieved profits, focus shifts to what is done with that surplus, on the one hand, and on the other, how with those efforts and in what circumstances this profit is made (Bhatta, 1998). Therefore, a businesswoman cannot be subsumed under the term 'businessperson'. A feminine vision has to work to change this masculine culture that is essentially subsuming in nature.

Women are better resource managers, because they have traditionally been engaged in natural resource management (Bardhan, 1989; Agarwal, 1989; Shiva, 1991 & 1989; Shiva and Mies, 1993) not only in India but also in other south Asian and African countries. While, their management skill is now well recognised in the corporate sector of the modern times<sup>5</sup>, it is relevant to quote here Ashok Mitra, who acknowledged this traditional skill in his own style in following words, '...if our great-grandmothers ran governments, they would have saved many lives indeed<sup>6</sup>."

A feminine vision emerges from a common woman's eyes and a 'common' Indian woman is a poor peasant woman, a farm labourer woman, and a casual woman worker. A common Indian woman is a nurturer, provider and pivot of the family. This feminine vision has the potential to become more inclusive. This has the potential to expand and to

embrace all poor, resourceless and deprived women (and men) struggling to create more humane survival conditions. This process of feminisation may lead to a more humanistic route to liberation that is capable of reducing alienation between the genders and creating better communication between them.

#### **4.3 Reproduction versus Production: A Reversal of the Paradigm**

A feminine vision stands for survival rather than victory, when it comes to human existence; conservation rather than destruction, when it comes to natural resources; sustenance rather than profit, when it comes to production; informalities rather than formal hierarchies, when it comes to governance. A feminine vision stands for careful regeneration rather than careless consumption. A feminine vision stands for reproduction rather than production. A feminine vision strongly argues for production for reproduction, because all production activities aim at reproduction of the existence of the human of the species. As a logical conclusion to this scheme of thinking, production becomes the means for reproduction rather than the 'end' in itself! Reproduction, instead of production, therefore, is central to a feminine vision. This argues for a radical shift in the theoretical underpinnings of development paradigm. This argues for a 'reversal' of the dominant paradigm relating to production and reproduction, which assigns centre stage to the former and peripheral to the later. A feminine vision, therefore, argues that reproduction is the basic production process and production is the 'means' for sustaining of this basic production process.

Dietrich (1996) offers an alternative perspective for development (Chapter-4). This is Production of life and Livelihood versus Production of Profit perspective. This conceptualization, she argues, is not new in itself as it goes back to the early writings of Karl Marx<sup>7</sup>. Reversing Marxian preference for 'production', Dietrich argues that if production of life and livelihood is understood as the basic production process, without which extended production process is not thinkable, it become obvious that any production process, which destroys the life world and the resource base for survival, is ultimately self-defeating.

I argue that reproduction includes production of life, production of livelihood to sustain the life and creation of the livelihood systems thereby - all finally leading to the re-creation and re-generation of the life itself. Reproduction, therefore, is regeneration and sustenance of the whole life world. Seen from this perspective, all extended production processes, thus

aim at, providing the means for the basic process of reproduction; serving the basic cause of reproduction. That the production is for the human and human are not for production; science is for the human and human are not for science; technology is for the human and human is not for the technology. 'We do not exist to serve technology; technology exists to serve us (Greer, Ibid: 413)'. This approach offers an alternative feminine vision for development, which assigns central place to reproduction and production processes have to be organised around this 'centre'.

## 5. TOWARDS A FRESH BEGINNING

This study concludes that market forces as a powerful catalyst for change in gender relations argues for a feminine route to liberation in north Bihar. The emergence of a feminine sector of production provides the material basis for this argument. In central Bihar, the mobilisation as the alternative catalyst for change in gender relations argues for a feminisation of the strategy of mobilisation itself.

The growing gender consciousness within class-consciousness now argues in favour of mobilisation for development and against detrimental of development. Even the class based mass mobilisation in central Bihar is now wrestling with the question that the economic basis for struggle against class and gender discrimination is weakening in absence of economic development. The struggle for redistributive justice seeks to ask itself - what would be possible to redistribute if there is nothing to redistribute? This debate within the large section<sup>8</sup> of the radical movement has led them recognise the need for development and the necessity to combat the detrimental of development, the theoretical underpinnings for which is provided by the thesis of 'bureaucratic feudalism' (Chapter – 5:6).

Another development in central Bihar is women's rage over the politics of violence and counter-violence, as this 'masculine' route for change is affecting them worst irrespective of their class identities. This has remarkably increased the number of widows and orphaned children over last decades. This process has increased the volume of feminisation of poverty in central Bihar. The present situation is, therefore, ripe for arguing in favour of strong mobilisation for development in a region where movement, strategically, had no truce with development. The growing preference for strong mass mobilisation over the guerrilla form of armed struggle, around gender issues as well as on survival questions offers expanding opportunities for women to participate and act decisive. This, combined

with growing feminist consciousness within the movement, suggests towards a trend that may be described as feminine route to radical mobilisation.

While this concern for development is encouraging, the radical mobilisation is also capable of proposing a whole alternative set of social reconstruction agenda. What is missing in their programme is an alternative approach to development. The mobilisation against detriments of development and for development, on the other hand, stands uncomfortable with the existing nature of gendered development programmes run by the state and often reject them. This happens because the resource-relative market induced development with a gendered agenda is often contra posed to class interests.

I have stated (Chapter – 2) that the Developmentalist and the Movementalist feminist positions have no truce with each other. They are rather contra posed. This study offers some insights into how a truce between the two is possible to establish. The central Bihar case suggests that mobilisation is coming closer to development concerns.

Empowerment, similarly, is contra posed to consciousness. The basic difference between empowerment and consciousness needs to be made here. The resources (material and others) with women vis-à-vis men can enable them stake their power vis-à-vis men and for that empowerment (through micro development) is prescribed by the gender perspective. Mobilisation, on the other end, is directed towards rising of one's inner-strength to the level of heightened consciousness that can be transformed into the power to resist and change. Consciousness emanates from inner strength.

Empowerment within a bargaining model supports women from outside (exterior) so that they could have the 'power to bargain'. Mobilisation transforms their inner strength to the level of consciousness that helps transform their whole inner being (interior). Power to bargain cannot bring results unless it is supported by the 'inner strength' and endurance that comes from deeper level of consciousness. Therefore, power to bargain and power to transform (resist and change) needs to come closer to each other rather than contra posed (to each other).

An alternative feminine perspective to development (4.3) can offer a rescue from this uncomfortable situation. This perspective to development can provide material basis to the consciousness that is generated through mobilisation. And, the consciousness, in turn, could become powerful 'input' for development. This distinct nature of truce is possible to

establish between the two entities - development and movement - hitherto directed against each other.

Finally, this study opens up some fresh areas for exploration:

- I have approached 'classification of peasantry' from a gender-relative viewpoint (Chapter – 7). This can help evaluate the actual volume and nature of labour that women employ in farming activities. Their labour is often subsumed under the term 'family labour'. The actual recognition of women's contribution to the productive regime has to be empirically established in the arena of 'gender-neutral' economic theorization. This is required for feminising of development agenda as well.
- Another area of exploration relates to 'theorisation from below' (Chapter – 5:6). The thesis of 'petty mode of production' has good potential for arguing in favour of a farming system, of which women are the backbone. Bihar (as well as extensive parts of Indian countryside) is a rich site for this exploration. Extensive empirical study around this theme is required to test this thesis.
- How far is gender perspective succeeding in 'feminising' development agenda in Bihar (in India as well) and how deeper are the cleavages between 'womanisation' and 'feminisation' on the ground? An evaluation from this particular viewpoint would help in shaping those policies that incorporate feminist agenda.
- A further exploration into the themes of 'feminine farming' and 'feminine productive regime' emerging against the setting of market-infused development led structural transformation is most required in the countryside of Bihar. Such potential sites for exploration are those regions, where commercial farming has developed. A comparative study in relatively less developed regions would also offer some insights into these themes.
- The task of writing a 'feminine historiography' of the radical movement in Bihar (in India as well) is grossly neglected. But, much more important now is an exploration into the growth of the feminist consciousness not only within radical movement but also in the process of other forms of mobilisation. However, a close look at the radical mobilisation, it's shifting towards development, and struggle against

detrimentals of development is required.

- And, last but certainly not the least, an exploration into the actions, forms, and nature of 'people's initiatives' scattered across the state is required not only to address the issue of development but also to put development schemes and fund for the same under competent supervision. It is encouraging that more than 40,000 women are elected throughout the state as Panchayat representatives. The potential may be enormous, provided, the extension of a subordinating role of women in a family does not inflict the Panchayati raj institutions.

It is essential to look into the countryside of the state of Bihar afresh after bifurcation of the Jharkhand as a separate state. This is high time to address the issue of structural setting with a fresh outlook. And, this is high time to address the issue of 'gendered' development as well. An exploration into the 'feminine vision' is sought to authenticate it, empirically. The expansion of this vision is possible only through extensive and concerted field research around these issues. An expanded feminine vision emerging from the ground would provide conceptual basis for building up a fresh holistic, humanistic and inclusive feminist perspective, i.e. the Women's Worldview. This study is a fresh beginning!

## NOTES

### Chapter One

1. This was one of the many popular sayings about a Naxalite. The radical left activists are popularly called Naxalite, because the Naxalite movement sprang up first in a region called Naxalbari in West Bengal.

2. The present state of Bihar, after its division into two separate states - Bihar and Jharkhand, with effect from 15th November 2000 - consists of only two former regions, the north and the central parts. This division has not affected this study as both the empirical sites fall under these two regions and can be said to represent the present state of Bihar.

3. The abolition of Zamindari followed by tenancy reforms considerably reduced the multiplex hierarchies in land. See (Chapter - 5) for a brief account of this process.

4. Approachable, because I had to write this thesis in a very restricted and difficult situation at home, which did not allow me consult global literature on market and mobilisation during writing up phase. See (Chapter - 6).

5. The safety net that government has envisaged (GOI, 1993, pp. 19-20, In Ranadive, J., 1994)). This spells out three components: a National Renewal Fund, which finances schemes for compensation retraining and deployment of workers affected by restructuring; a strengthening of the Public Distribution System; and a stepping up of the expenditure on social sectors. While this set of safety net is not only inadequate and runs into difficulty, there are debates about whether it is pro-rich and urban-biased.

6. A Preparatory Committee for Alternative Economic Policies (New Delhi) posits that India has enough resources to solve her problem without help from the Bretton Woods Institutions.

7. These barriers (counterproductive to growth) are 'license raj' and 'ever-proliferating bureaucracy' (Dreze & Sen, 1996).

8. That includes those associated particularly with literacy and education (also those connected with basic health, social security, gender equality, land rights, and local democracy).

9. Dietrich (1996) cites a Buddhist story to explain the globalisation and the safety net, it offers to women. Once a man was drowning in a sudden flood. Just as he was about to drown, he found a raft. He clung to it, and it carried him safely to dry land. He was so grateful to the raft that he carried it on his back for the rest of his life.

10. Which aims at: bringing all female-headed households (30-35%) above the poverty line and attain the target of women constituting 30 percent of all beneficiaries assisted under the IRDP.

11. The Eight Plan states that a lot in the area of education, especially literacy, health, family planning, land improvement, efficient land use, minor irrigation, watershed management, recovery of waste land, forestation, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries and sericulture can be achieved by creating people's institutions accountable to the community (Krishnaraj, 1998).

12. These routes are:

- (a) An entrepreneurship route - where a group of dynamic women leaders emerge out of socially imposed constraints;
- (b) An absolutely administered route, where gender sensitivity is brought in as a matter of state policy.



13. Such as eroding the base of public health care, social insurance and more extensive public education. All this comes as a part of the stabilisation measures.

14. The pre-reform development model was capital-intensive but curbs on foreign trade; foreign capital built indigenous capabilities in industry. Reservation of products to small scale and cottage industry ostensibly retained occupations and protected employment. Land reforms were attempted though kept in abeyance. Distributive justice was made an agenda though seen as handing out 'anti-poverty programmes'. The green revolution achieved 'self-sufficiency' by abolishing imports and filling the FCI godowns though it left the poor with no better access to food.

15. In contrast to the neo-classical economics, the ideological and methodological basis of which is impersonal functioning in a 'free-market' situation, which automatically brings about an efficient allocation of resources among individuals (see Kurien, 1994).

16. That comes from the unprecedented and uncontrolled growth of media, television, in particular.

17. The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, September 4-15, 1995, Beijing.

## **Part - I**

### **Chapter Two**

1. Self-realisation is normally used as a spiritual connotation (contemplation etc.) in Indian context. This limits the broader meaning of the term. What Maslow means by self-actualization, a more material connotation, is not different from what the self-realization is. We've used both the terms as synonyms.

2. With Maslow, for the first time since Freud and Charcot - psychology ceases to be the study of mental sickness. He recognizes that we are living in a low-synergy (acting together) society and that it would be healthier, if transformed into a high synergy society. In 1943, in his paper, A Theory of Human Motivation, published in the Psychological Review for July, Maslow expounded his theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs'; and in 1950 his most important work Self-Actualizing People: A study of Psychological Health (later included in Motivation and Personality) was published. This work is the foundation of Maslowian psychology, as Freud's Interpretation of Dreams is the foundation of Freudian psychology. (see Colin, 1979:168-202, Higher Ceilings of Human Nature).

3. Towards the end of his life Maslow came to a belated rather sad recognition that the world was full of Babbitts, for whom self-esteem represented the summit of their personal development, though he concluded that it was possible for anyone to become a 'self-actualizer' (Colins, 1979).

4. Though 'mechanism' for self-actualization has been later devised by others who claim that it was possible for anyone to become a 'self-actualiser' (see Colin, 1979:205:270, Where Now? in New Pathways of Psychology).

5. Marx has taken the term 'species-being' from Ludwig Feuerbach's philosophy where it is applied to man and mankind (see Marx (1977:199) Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844).

6. Friedan quoted that among 3,000 college students interviewed by Maslow, only about twenty percent seemed to be moving towards self-actualization and all these were not women (see Colins, 1979:200).

7. Gandhi is most generously labelled by the radical feminists as 'benevolent patriarch' in India.

8. This is just opposite to the Euro-centric feminist approach which advocates women to emulate men's aggressive strength.

9. Movement is used here in strict socio-political-cultural struggle/s for change context.

10. The label of bourgeois, radical, marxist, marxist or socialist feminists, eco-feminist are used as descriptions of positions taken by individuals or groups or the work done by them, this is just for analytical clarity.

11. Like other kind of social inequalities.

12. Market was seen as an arena where individuals are impersonally rewarded on the basis of objective results rather than good intentions, patronage, networks or ascribed characteristics such as sex, caste or race. The implications of development for women offered the above optimistic scenarios of changing roles, laying special emphasis on the opportunities it would offer women to exercise their rationality.

13. The WID school of Feminist perspective characterized as the first wave of official feminism (see Kabeer, 1994).

14. These errors were: (quoted in Kabeer, 1994:22)

- Omission: failure to notice and utilize women's roles in traditional society;
- Reinforcement: projects which merely reinforced pre-existing values that restricted women's roles to domestic and child-bearing activities;
- Addition: superimposition of Western values regarding appropriate work for women upon customary values and practices.

15. A particular model of the household; a nuclear family consisting of a male breadwinner / dependent housewife and children, which underpinned most development interventions.

16. The International Development Bureaucracy, while casting low-income household women in the role of managers and providers of family basic needs, retained its 'welfare' approach, by recognizing that these responsibilities have an economic component and therefore required income-enhancing measures - it incorporated the WID concern with women's productive roles (Kabeer, 1994).

17. In view of the growing economic crisis in the Third World, Rogers argue that continued neglect of women's productivity is a costly mistake that planners could no longer afford to make.

18. The concept of hegemony was introduced to understand how domination works through consent of the oppressed, through a whole range of ideology-ridden culture. (see Riddiough C, 1981; Akerkar, 1995).

19. This quote from the Simone de Beauvoir's classic (The Second Sex) is grossly misinterpreted in such a way that it loses its real meaning. The (mis) interpretation is—the author views no biological distinction between the sexes.

20. That society is the ensemble of the social relations. The proponents were mainly structuralist.

21. Motherhood, for instance, is such a crucial component of women's gender identity in most cultures that it is seen as the 'natural' expression of womanhood. Butler (1987) argues that this representation of motherhood as instinctual, rather than institutional, helps to disguise the possibility of motherhood as an optional practice. Equally there are powerful norms about masculinity that work against men taking on the role of 'mothering' and domestic work; to do so would be to risk masculinity.

22. Rosa Luxemburg contended that the Marxian model of accumulation was based on the assumption about capitalism as a closed system, that never existed in history (Mies, 1986:42-47).

23. Mies states that what the development experts call 'flexibilization' of labour, they have called the 'Housewifization' of labour. Thus, the term 'housewifization' covers all informal sector labour; the 'new poor' of the overdeveloped West, the substantial part of which are women.

24. This refers to debate on Class and Patriarchy under the title, *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* organised in 1981 (see Bib.)

25. Sex-affective production, that is bearing and rearing of children, provision of affection, nurturance, and sexual satisfaction etc.

26. Cultural Marxism- that could adequately explain the intricate interactions of the oppressions of race, class, and sex; that helps give a clearer articulation of voices; that understands human needs - family, ritual, religion, sex, fun, insanity, pain fear, and so on; finally that could reach and incorporate broader groups of people into the socialist movement (Hicks, 1981:221).

27. By Non-synchrony Hicks (1981:221) means the concept that individuals or groups in their relation to their economic and political system, do not share similar consciousness of that system or similar needs within it at the same point of time.

28. This was in contrast to the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'cultural feminism' that sparked off in Europe which focussed public spheres.

29. This was initiated in Italy. In India, the revolutionary Left took this initiative (Chapter 3 below).

30. For instance, Lyotard and Laclau.

31. But, the New Left were deeply committed to Marxism as a foundational paradigm, even if they did not respect the disciplinary pretenses of history .

32. Gramsci's notion of power radically alters the content, nature and from of power from the classical Marxian notion of power - a radical breakthrough in the Marxist theory of 'ideology' (see, Laclau and Mouffe, 1990; Scott, 1988).

33. Feminification of Theory - the debate under the same title appeared on the pages of the *Economic and Political Weekly* in 1995 (Gupta, 1995).

34. For instance, by accepting cultural relativism, it denies the political possibility of a universal category of 'women' required to bring about a change in the existing gender relationship and by legitimizing the cultural identities it forces women into culturally defined stereotypical mould of womanhood within a given society (see Poonacha, 1995).

35. Shiva characterizes the 'scientific revolution as reductionist' because it reduced the capacity of the human to know nature both by excluding other knowers and other ways of knowing, g, and it reduced the capacity of nature to creatively regenerate and renew itself by manipulating it as inert and fragmented matter.

36. Shiva refers to the Cartesian concept (see Shiva, 1990:40).

37. The original Indian tradition is exoteric (Tantrik) tradition with matriarchy as the dominant social system. Tantra, according to Douglas (1997) is the original Indian science and tradition, both which has diverse meaning and definitions. It assumes that the sexual union of Shiva (symbolized by man) and Shakti (symbolized by woman) is the source of all 'creation'. Tantrik traditions were later adapted by the Aryans, their 'esoteric' tradition assimilated many tantrik traditions.

38. This analysis differs from most conventional analysis of western environmentalists, feminists and their Indian counterparts, many of whom see women as 'victims' of environmental degradation.

39. Freudian notion of sexual superiority & inferiority complexes among the sexes.

40. Simone de Beauvoir had refused to attend the UN (Mexico) Women's Conference, because, she felt that it was designed only to integrate women into a masculine society (see, Sanghvi, 1986).

41. Women are stronger, far from being 'weaker sex'. In relation to size and body weight, women's brains are larger than men's; they are generally healthier than men and quicker to recover from physical illness; are better at recovering from psychological or emotional stress. At the present time, in all countries of the world life expectancy for women is greater than men (Douglas, 1994:339).

42. These books are: Woman: An Intimate Geography, by Natalie Angier (2000), a science writer for the New York Times and a Pulitzer Prize winner; Just Like A Woman, by Dianne Hales – this book is an exploration based on biological and physiological research, of all the ways women are turning out to be special – stronger than men in some way and weaker in some other; and, The First Sex, by Helen Fisher, an anthropologist predicting that women are psychologically primed to be the leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The last books were due out in April-May 2000. The source of this information is (Ehrenreich, B., 1999) The Real Truth About The Female, The New York Times.

### Chapter Three

1. This refers to the old women liberation movement of Europe and America.

2. Then Bihar was a part of Bengal Presidency. It re-acquired separate status of a state in 1911. From Calcutta the liberal social reform movement later spread in Bombay, Gujarat and Madras.

3. Some of these important crusaders were; Rajaram Mohan Rai, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Devendranath Thakur, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Dayanand Saraswati, De Rozio.

4. The campaign for purification of Hinduism and offensive against the liberal reformers was led by B.G.Tilak in Maharashtra, and Dayanand Saraswati in Bengal. The Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission and Theosophical Society of Bengal and Madras Hindu Association attacked reformists from the twin planks of being anti-religious and anti-national.

5. For instance, they promoted, re-marriage of child widows, but opposed adult widow re-marriage; promoted female education but of the kind that could make them better domestic performers.

6. Under the leadership of Jyoti Rao Phule in Maharashtra; Periyars in TamilNadu and later by Ambedkar in Maharashtra (see, Lederle, 1976).

7. An ornament wore by women as a sign of marriage.

8. It was almost similar to those of social reform movement, i.e prevention of early marriage, polygamy, purdah, dowry, and sanction for widow remarriage and property rights for women etc..

9. The Indian National Congress drew in large number of women into its fold from the beginning and educated liberal women were accommodated at the top level of the organisation. Sarojini Naidu and Anne Besant later became INC's presidents as well.

10. The AIWC succeeded in recording massive (one sixth of the total) women's participation. About 20 thousand women were arrested in this movement.

11. The colonial rule declared Emergency and started repression and arrests. Even moderate leaders of the INC were not spared.

12. Ela Reid had formed Women's Self-Defense League in April 1942 in Calcutta. League played the mother role in organising MARS. Its membership in 1943 was 22,000 that rose to 43,000 within a year in 1944 (Mukherjee, 1989).

13. The conference was attended by 850 delegates from 181 women organisations from 40 countries.

14. SEWA grew as a feminine alternative against this masculine trend after the transfer of power.

15. See, Saldana (1986) for Warli; Sundarayya (1972) for Telangana, Chakraborty R. (1980) for Tebhaga, and Chakravarty A. (1986) for Santhal revolt.

16. Lagnagadi was a kind of 'bondage' and landlords often separated married couples to 'access' bondage laborer's wives, whenever they wished.

17. Stri Shakti Sanghatana (ed.) Life Stories of Women in Telangana Struggle (see Bib.).

18. For instance, with withdrawal of Telangana movement by its leadership the cadres felt betrayed.

19. Gandhi wanted to dissolve the INC and sent millions of its cadres to villages to work for socio-cultural transformation of the country, after the transfer of power. Gandhian strategy combined 'Reconstruction with Politics'. He was aware of the fact that transfer of power alone would not bring in total transformation as lack of an original vision would consequently result in a replication of the colonial model by the indigenous people.

20. Declining in terms of population growth as well. The sources for all figures in this section are: CSDS Data Unit, in Fact File 1952-1997, Seminar, September 1997 and newspaper clippings for the post-1997 figures. Women were most ineffective in electoral politics during 1967-72. This had a marked effect on works carried out by them in politics before independence and upto 1966.

21. The criminalization keeps even 'good' men away and out of the political arena and practice.

22. During 1972-77, election tickets were distributed to women, on compassionate grounds, such as a vacancy in the constituency caused by death of husband/ father/ brother, or as 'dummy candidates', if the party is sure of losing the seat.

23. A state with a glowing history of an enlightened women leadership since early 20th century through the 1960's.

24. The other disadvantaged classes, castes, minorities, in general and women, in particular as well. They all are clubbed here in 'poor' and 'women'.

25. The ML (Naxalite) movement had to suffer the severest repression. It claimed thousands of lives in West Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh during its early phase (1967-71).

26. It were the socialists who represented the aspirations of the middle castes social groups - a process already initiated during 1967 parliamentary elections.

27. This document may be treated as the Indian version of Women's Role in Economic Development (Boserup, 1970).

28. The thrust of the programs for women development was encapsulated in five principle categories of services: (i) employment and income -generation (ii) education and training (iii) support services (iv) general awareness (v) legal support service.

29. Margaret Alva, then Minister for Social Welfare, states that over the last five years the State legislations have brought 1 million women into local panchayat bodies with 75,000 of them holding elected positions. In Karnataka, they have far exceeded the 33 % reserved quota (see Bib.).

30. It is not known whether this is formulated or not by now.

31. The Women Representation Bill was brought to Parliament raising the reserved quota for women to 33 % in urban and rural local bodies in December 1992.

32. It was prepared by a core group of 14, headed by Margaret Alva. The core group consulted 11 experts with no member from any women's organization (except one from the AIWC). The sector papers were prepared by Women's Division of the National Institute PCCD with no consultation with the women's groups.

33. The Hindu religious text that defines gender-relations and assigns subservient role to women in relation to men.

34. This assumption was later generalized in all India context, without taking into account the diversified Hindu cultural contexts and practices across the country, especially in the central and northern regions (Hindi heartland) that contrasts the southern Indian cultural and religious practices.

35. Which led to overthrow of the Congress and Indira Gandhi from power in 1977. After attaining power, the leaders of the Janta Party betrayed the JPian vision of 'Total Revolution'. This frustrated JP and he took up 'reconstruction' work and created student-youth organisations for this purpose.

36. Kamiya - a kind of attached labour, for whose liberation and redistribution of land in their name, Vahini fought in Bodh Gaya.

37. The first campaign demanding intervention of the state & the civil society in dowry murder case was organised in Delhi (1979).

38. The first campaign against custodial rape was launched in 1980, followed by a Supreme Court judgment, in which two policemen were acquitted by reversal of the Bombay High Court judgment who had convicted them for raping a 16 year old tribal girl, Mathura, in police custody. Four law-experts issued an open letter asking the Supreme Court to reopen this case.

39. Man vis-à-vis woman in this context; posing them as 'oppositional' categories.

40. The Shah Bano Muslim Bill passed under Muslim fundamentalist pressure in 1986 deprived divorced muslim women of the right to maintenance by her husband.

41. Roopkunwar was a young woman burnt in Rajasthan as 'sati'.

42. The first Bill against Sati was passed in 1829 after the 19<sup>th</sup> century social reformers launched massive campaign for it.

43. The term radical Marxist-feminist is used here is a new expression which appears to be the most suited phrase for this stream. The Naxalite forces are called radical left within the leftist political camp.

44. This is restricted to gender & class positions, otherwise different ML organisations usually get caught up in intense controversial discussions with one another on strategic issues. This study is not concerned with this aspect.

45. The launcher and the leader of the SEWA.

46. Noted economist Dharam Kumar advocated this idea. Femicide was advocated in 1974 by one of the key persons in the Indian population control establishment as well (see Mies, 1986).

47. For instance, the CPI affiliate women's organization was galvanized in 1980-81 and the RSS and the BJP reincarnated their women organizations by late eighties.

48. Sita, the wife of Ram; the meaning of 'Sita' is, daughter of the earth.

49. Three centuries ago, more than 300 members of the Bishnoi community of Rajasthan, led by a woman, Amrita Devi, sacrificed their lives to save khejiri trees by clinging to them and with this event began the recorded history of Chipko. (see Bishnoi, 1987; also Jugal Kishore, letter from Gandhi to Miraben, Jan.16, 1948, quoted in Shiva V., 1990).

50. Though the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangha (RSS) had for many years, an affiliate women's organization, it never brought women out in the streets. They mobilized upper caste-middle class women during 'sati' (1987) and Kar Sewa (early 1990s) politics.

51. This new Hindu woman shown on the cover page of 'Jagriti', a BJP published journal, is a young 'grim faced woman' stepping out on a radiant part of the cover with uplifted head, against a dark background showing two women crouching in a helpless posture. The body of this woman shows no 'sindur', 'veil', or even a 'bindi'; her whole stance is aggressive (Sarkar 1991: 2062).

52. The western concepts of nature and women; science and development etc. .

53. Organised by the Akhil Bhartiya Krantikari Sanskritik Sangh, the cultural organization of the Marxist Co-ordination Committee (MCC).

54. Hierarchies of attributes symbolizing masculine-feminine, such as, rationality over emotionality; reason over intuition, mind over matter, neutrality over sexuality.

55. Lutheran asceticism - that glorifies sexual neutrality and thereby, rational masculinity (see Chapter-2).

56. The deconstruction of theory (see Chapter -2).

57. Indian novelists, Sharat Chandra (male), Ismat Chughtai, Ashapurna Devi, Mahasweta Devi, Mahadevi verma, Amrita Pritam, (all female) Ravindranath, Bimal Mitra (male) and many more.

58. By dominant concept of violence as power, here I mean that the whole system is based on 'violence' (Shiva, Mies), 'violence' adopted as a 'strategy' for struggle against this violent system is qualitatively different. It is, in fact, 'counter-violence' or 'violence in response'.

## Chapter Four

1. For instance, if women are facing serious domestic violence, build a shelter; inequality in girl's education is sought to be erased by reducing fees, not by addressing the problem of parental preference for boy's education or sexual labour division.

2. The term 'Benevolent Dictator' is originally coined by Pluto.

3. The male absentee criterion for female headedness offered by Islam (1991) are:

- no adult male member present owing to death, divorce, desertion or separation;
- with a disabled male head, whose authority is transferred to eldest female member, usually, the wife;
- where a male head is away for long time, but sends remittances and leaves his wife with increased responsibility for key tasks;
- with a transient husband who does not send remittances and the woman therefore takes full responsibilities of 'headship';

- with the surviving adult son surrendering authority on the father's death to the mother, who becomes head;
- with age factor in marriage, where young wives takes over the charge.

4. Report by the Committee on the Status of Women in India.

5. The Mode of Production debate was carried on by the Economic & Political Weekly in India.

6. While foodgrains production grew at 3.5 percent per annum during 1980s, it has decelerated to 1.5 percent from 1990-96 despite a run of very good, well distributed rainfall.

7. lifting of land ceilings in the corporate agro-commercial interest.

8. Opium cultivation in Bihar led to elevate a particular opium cultivating caste people from poor upto middle peasant status.

9. The rural to rural migration from backward regions to the developed areas of high labour demand, such as Punjab, Western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat etc.– the another important area was then ignored.

10. Dowry as a cultural practice contains the material provisions by the bride's parents for facilitating the newly wed couple in making their new home. This cultural practice is entirely different from what the present form of dowry is, i.e practiced as market in marriage transforming the groom's status as a marketable product.

11. That encompasses only conventional economic categories of work.

12. Usual Status Work Participation Rate is estimated by recording what normally individuals do for a living for at least half the year.

13. When the reported activity is 'household' duties or 'student' for example, a further probe is conducted to find out if they have undertaken productive work at all even when the normal activity is considered unproductive. Such an activity is considered to be a Subsidiary activity.

14. The GDI owes its origin to its precursor - the HDI - which comprises of three main components, viz, per capita income, educational attainment, and life expectancy. The implication is that deprivation in these three components is important from the gender disparities view point (see Prabhu et al, 1996).

15. The framework they offer is complicated but comprehensive enough to provide useful inferences for policy purpose, because it presents sectoral indices.

16. GEM is measured on the basis of indices pertaining to three variables: (i) power over economic resources depicted by per capita income; (ii) access to professional activities and participation in economic decision-making based on share of jobs in the professional, managerial, technical, and administrative categories; (iii) political opportunities and decision-making based on share of parliamentary seats.

17. As well as those subject to unfavourable outcomes.

18. As opposed to the conventional analysis that links it to welfare improvement and poverty alleviation.

19. Looking beyond the conventional approach of family-based farming.

20. See Chapter -2 (Note: 33)

21. For instance, the heroic roles played by women, in general as well as in specific contexts have been given space.



22. The patriarchal attitude of the party, the blatant manifestation of which was the total exclusion of women from the BPKS membership in 1940s was also brought to light.

23. An autonomous women's group of Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).

24. They traveled alone, carried guns, maintained shelters, sold newspapers, made friends, and became comrades openly.

25. As it approaches ecology from a Marxist perspective.

26. Reductionist, i.e. nature seen as individual parts without its inter-connections; the forest, for instance, seen as reduced to trees, the trees to wood for commercial use etc..

27. Representing 29 grass roots groups across the country in the Conference (1989).

28. The universal scientific knowledge systems borrowed from the West.

29. This conflict exists between the traditionally produced viable survival structures (which provided a survival base for all, at the cost, however, of being patriarchal, castiest, and discriminatory) and the so-called universal knowledge systems which go counter to the structures of the traditional lifeworld. The traditional system was ecologically sustainable and socially stable as long as the existing injustices were accepted as given.

30. Be it in the form of home remedies, cooking, the readiness to defend hearth and home against eviction, food processing, water management, fuel collection cloth production etc.

31. Marx speaks of the earliest sexual division of labour in the production of life itself, an activity that he himself later 'misleadingly' termed as 'reproduction', creating the impression that the system of extended commodity production is primary and production of life is only the 'reproduction' of this dominant system of commodity production (see Dietrich, 1996).

32. Bruner (1983:5) points out (in research methodology context) that there exists a basic story (along with the subjective analyses of the facts) which, in essence, depends on certain kinds of data such as factual information such as age, household size, number of children etc.. They appear the same to all and form the backbone of the 'basic story' (see Chapter 5).

## **PART - II**

### **Chapter Five**

1. Though other outcomes may not be denied, especially in south Bihar.

2. The early phase of radical mobilisation was ruthlessly suppressed by the state.

3. With small landed gentry occupying the top position in agrarian hierarchy, a contrast to the North.

4. An article (Gadbada Raha Hai Stree-purush Anupat) based on the survey conducted by a local NGO in Punjab (published in the national daily - The Hindustan, November 15, 1998, Sunday supplement, p.1), which found that femicide is occurring via (mis)using the advanced medical techniques.

5. Including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.
6. The highest being 50+; middle 40-50, and the lowest up to 40.
7. The lowest is up to 20, the middle 20-30 and the highest 30+. See (chapter III / notes 12 and 13) for the Usual and Subsidiary work statuses.
8. Information for this section is provided by Kamlesh Sharma, an Activist, of the CPI- ML (Liberation) in Jahanabad. He has studied (Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Patna University) radical movement in Central Bihar from a geo-political perspective.
9. Vaishali, the north western part of present Bihar, was the first democratic republic in India, as the Magadh was the first empire in India.
10. It was against the Brahminical order, which prescribed Kashtriya (the warrior caste, popularly called Rajputs) to become the rulers. Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya dynasty was a lower caste non-rajput. Mahapadmananda, the founder of the Nand dynasty was a Brahmin.
11. Kabirpanth, named after the great saint & poet Kabir during 16-17<sup>th</sup> century.
12. Land of the uncivilized, uncultured people. Even today, if some one from the north dies in the south across the Ganges, the last rituals are performed in the north.
13. It was at Buxar that the British had to fight the final battle before establishing their control.
14. It was politically articulated and organized under the umbrella of Triveni Sangha.
15. See, for Santhal bataidari struggle in Purnea (Chakraborty A., 1986).
16. Jayprakash Narain launched a counter peaceful land-distribution movement to frustrate the militants and he succeeded.
17. Such as: (i) as a general rule the zamindars were paid liberal compensation; (ii) they were permitted to retain vast tracts as Khas possession for personal cultivation; (iii) those who had enjoyed the status of 'tenants' under the 'ancient regime' had the right to purchase the land under their control by paying capitalized rental values. Bihar was the first state to pass the Zamindari Abolition Act in 1948 and zamindari was abolished in three phases, the last one beginning from 1 April 1956. For a summary of the Land-reform legislations and its implementation (see, Jannuzi, 1974; Prasad, 1993 etc.).
18. Fictitious distribution / transfer of land in the name of different family members and others for evading Ceiling Laws.
19. The Bihar Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling Area and Acquisition of Surplus Land) Act, 1961.
20. The chief minister and the finance minister of Bihar who not only took initiative for land reforms but struggled hard with the zamindars and rajas, who then approached the President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad (himself from Bihar) to stop the chief minister Sahay, who was acting 'radical' and taking an anti-zamindar position. Sahay had to lose the next election for his 'radicalism'.
21. The ceiling fixed for various classes of land had been reduced to between 15 to 30 acres (see Prasad, 1993).
22. The Bihar Tenancy (Amendment) Act 1986.
23. Because no tenurial security was granted to them after the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. The Party Document (1954), the Communist Party of India.

24. C.H. Hanumantha Rao, attracted attention towards the fact that high incidence of concealed tenancies has remained a reason for lack of investment in agriculture (quoted in Prasad, 1993).

25. Minister for the Revenue and Land-reforms, Government of Bihar, Inder Singh Namdhari (Hindustan Daily, November 15, 1996, Malik Bataidari Adhiniyam se na Ghabarayen).

26. Based on land statistics prepared by the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Government of Bihar (see Bharti, 1993).

27. The official records speak of 1. 63 million acres, in possession of 25 big land-holders in 1983, mostly concentrated in north Bihar. One report informs that only 8 landlords having occupied 50 thousands acres, out of which 6 were in north Bihar. The Revenue Department, in 1976, had prepared a list of 500 big landholders with 500-5000 acres in their possession. Another official list prepared during 1976-83, reports about 400 big landholders with hundreds of acres of surplus. These records are obtained from government record based news reports published in local and national News Dailies. The latest official records are not available.

28. A religious institution that controls a number of temples in a particular area. The custodian of the Math and its property is called Mahantha. The Bodh Gaya Math owns thousands of acres even after a decade long struggle for liberating land.

29. In contrast to the avowed objective of the Indian state to create a society along socialist line. Transaction and reconsolidation of land, forceable eviction of tenants etc. can be explained in terms of growing tendency of privatisation (Kurien, 1992).

30. To the landlords and above them to the British rule.

31. Smaller administrative units constituting a district. These blocks were in Bhojpur and Patna.

32. During colonial rule cash crops such as, indigo, opium were substantially grown in these regions.

33. The thesis that the central and south Bihar is more urbanized, agriculturally more developed, in contrast to the north, which is less urbanized and depends on traditional mode of cultivation is still widely accepted.

34. These were: (i) tendency of capital-intensive and modern sophisticated technique based farming (ii) cropping intensity (iii) tube-well irrigation (iv) canal irrigation (v) use-level of HYV seeds (vi) tenancy-level.

35. The source for the figures revealing this composition and subsequent change is, Directorate of Statistics and Evaluation, Bihar. See, Sharma (1987).

36. A classification (Chaddha, 1987) of national-level use of fertilizer categorized the districts using below 10 kg per hectare as 'critically poor'; between 10-20 kg as 'very poor'; between 20-30 kg as 'poor'; and between 30-40 kg as 'medium'.

37. The 1975-76 NCAER Fertilizer Demand Survey data throws up some light over fertilizer use-pattern. See, Murlidhar (1981).

38. Source: Agricultural Statistics: Statewise, Economic & Political Weekly, June 29, 1996.

39. Figures used in this part is obtained from news report (Das Saal Mein Vahan 4 se 13 lakh Hue), published in, The Hindustan, Nov. 5, 1998, Patna.

40. This is highest in a situation of huge cattle smuggling from Bihar across the boarder (to Bangal desh). Such news frequently appear on the pages of the local dailies published from Bihar.

41. To Purushottampur village in Muzaffarpur district in May 1997.

42. Factors facilitating rich peasantry appropriate gains were: their greater access to information about new inputs and scarce facilities like HYV seeds, fertilizers, canal-irrigated water, tube-well etc. via their close ties with the local administration; access to institutional credit facilitating them buy new biochemical and mechanical inputs; access to greater resources enabling them bear the 'risk' attached with the new technology.

43. Such as Bhoodan movement, Jay Prakash Narain led socialist movement launched by the Vahini (see Chapter-3) etc..

44. Known as Rajput and Bhumihaar castes.

45. Known as Kurmi, Yadav, and Koeries.

46. The old Gaya district comprised of modern Gaya, Nawada, Aurangabad and Jahanabad districts.

47. The radical movement, popularly known as Naxalite movement first sparked off in 'naxalbari' – that means the 'bari' (home) of the Naxals - in north western part of west Bengal. Naxalbari is located close to the north eastern region of Bihar.

48. The Naxalism believed that India was predominantly an agrarian society, therefore, only agrarian revolution can be the vanguard of the total liberation.

49. The lead was taken by Jayprakash Narain in Musahari itself during 1968-9, where ceiling laws began to be implemented and some development projects were also launched to 'divert' the agitated peasantry from the Naxalite path.

50. The CPI had gradually transformed into a raiyat's party, representing the rich and middle peasantry and her mass base was gradually not only being eroded but it was fast getting into the fold of the radicals, viz, the Naxalites. The progressive segment of the CPI cadreship had already parted away in mid-60s, with the formation of the CPI (M). It was the 'radical' local leadership from within the CPI (M) in Bihar (west Bengal as well) which initially constituted the CPI (ML).

51. Implementing of the Ceiling act, viz, the tenancy reforms were taken up during 1970s, though the process could not continue apace. Populist programmes such as 'twenty point program' for poverty eradication was launched by the union government, then headed by Indira Gandhi.

52. This position differed from a complete rejection of the parliamentary path, hitherto pursued. The process was initiated by the core progressive section of the CPI (ML) which constituted the PCC (Provisional Coordination Committee) in 1977. Other groups, then decried this as 'accommodating' line, but adopted the same after a decade.

53. Mainly from Bhojpur, Gaya, Aurangabad entered the Jharkhand region – the home of tribals. They ruthlessly exploited the tribal society, devastated their culture, and uprooted them from their own habitates. This was added and abated by the 'development' projects which further destroyed tribal world system. All this culminated into the sustainable movement for a separate Jharkhand state, which is now in making with the approval of the Jharkhand Bill in the Parliament as well as in the state assembly of Bihar.

54. In west Bengal, the middle rank leadership along with the local cadres of the CPI (M) broke off to constitute the Naxalite leadership. In Andhra Pradesh, it was the top rank leadership of the CPM which deserted the party for joining Naxalism.

55. The Bihar Students Association (BSA), the student wing of the PCC was one such urban platform. The next generation of the leadership emerged from this forum. Many bright youths from Patna University, in Bihar, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi sacrificed their careers for Naxalite ideology. The number of such youths (men and women both) from different universities in India is possible to count.

56. Some big organisations such as, the Maoist Communist Center (MCC) and the CPI (ML) People's War represent the leftist (hardliners); the CPI (ML) Liberation, the rightist (softliner); and the CPI (ML) Unity Initiative represent the centrist (synthesiser) stream.

57. The MCC

58. The CPI (ML) Liberation, the biggest soft-liner.

59. The state machinery acted in accordance with land reforms laws and under the pressure from below, i.e., the mobilisers.

60. MFV, then was as in cash & kind combine terms - 3 kg. of rice & breakfast or Rs.10; little below wage rate was as 2-2.5 Kg. of rice & breakfast or Rs. 6.67 - Rs. 8.33; and the lowest rate was 1.5 - 1.75 kg. rice & breakfast or Rs. 5 - Rs. 5.83.

61. Carried out by the A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna and the International Labour Organization, Geneva.

62. Implies that as the holding sizes grow, the female labour is withdrawn from the fieldwork.

63. For instance, whether to forge an alliance with the middle peasantry has remained a live issue throughout 1980s. This is now strongly felt by the movement – a belated recognition.

64. Hitherto debated and theorized within the Academia - we call it theorization from above. The think-tank within the radical movement is now debating production mode; challenging the semi-feudalism; characterizing the production mode - we call it Theorization from below - the initiative is taken by the CPI (ML) New Initiative leadership see (Sinha, A., 1997).

65. Habib (1963; 1995), Sharma (1974; 1984; 1995), Mukhia (1979; 1981), Chattopadhyay (1995) and many other Indian Marxist historians subscribe to this position. Even Karl Marx, in his writings does not view feudalism as a world system, like Capitalism.

66. The famous saying of Mao Tse Tung.

67. As they have to protect their vested interests.

68. Spread across different states, yet constitute similar ecological zones, such as Jharkhand in Bihar, west Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

69. The petty mode of production was set by Marx who considered its classical form to be post-feudal, a mode out of which, and at whose expense, capitalism has arisen (Habib, 1995:50, quoted in Sinha, 1997). Also see, The Capital Vol. I, p. 713, 'Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation'.

70. This data for calculating this percentage is obtained from the Center For Monitoring Indian Economy, July 1996 and the 8th, 26th & 37th rounds of the NSS data (see Sinha, 1997).

## Chapter Six

1. This was village Pachira, in Raniganj Block, where Dr Geof Wood has been working since 1970s.

2. My Journalistic profile helped me combat this 'hostile' attitude of bureaucracy in Purnea.

3. North Bihar is characterised as a region with big villages both in terms of population and area in comparison to South Bihar plains. Tikapatti is bigger than a standard big North Bihar village.

4. See, District Gazetteer of Purnea (1963), which contains the list of villages, many of which named after milikdari, pattidari, gatchhabandi tenures etc.

5. Panchayat is the local unit of the state administration, at the bottom. An area inhabited by 10,000 people is criteria for constituting a Panchayat. Tikapatti is an exceptionally big village - population-wise- therefore it requires only Teldiha, a small village to be included to fulfill the above criteria.

6. For instance, some parts of north western region of Bihar. In Purushottampur village in Muzaffarpur district, we came across many findings in common with Tikapatti.

7. Late Bhola Paswan Shastri, who remained the Chief Minister for three terms in between 1968-1972. First term 22.2.1968-29.6.1968, second term 22.6.69-4.7.69, and third term 2.6.71-9.1.72.

8. This is pioneer study in the sense that no such serious academic research on gender issues has been attempted so far. One random survey has been conducted by Govind Kelkar in late 80s.

### **PART - III**

#### **Chapter Seven**

1. As a participant to a three month e.seminar on 'Poverty in Bihar', sponsored by the UNICEF. See, Rodgers (2000) Growth in western India reduces Poverty in Bihar, bihar times.com.

2. Dominated by raiyats - big and small giving way to a less skewed agrarian structure.

3. The dominant tribal community, original inhabitants of south Bihar. Santhal are very efficient and hard working farmers. They were brought to this region to cultivate the volatile land, which was very hard to do for the local labourers. After 1911, when cultivation became predictable, they began claiming their rights over the land they cultivated for decades. When denied, they launched sustained struggle against the big tenants.

4. Compared to Rupauli - it occupies 5.80 percent of the total area of Rupauli, but constitute 6.33 percent of its populace.

5. It could be explained in terms of availability of a big village market place, educational and other community institutions, homestead land, groves etc..

6. Since the exact historical location of the village is not possible to trace I have to rely on the informal and formal information scattered about Dharampur and trace the evolution of the village. The fact that Tikapatti was a part of Dharampur, is confirmed by all sources including villagers.

7. This paragona was assigned as an additional revenue division to the huge Tirhut estate of the Raj in 1815. It was the second largest estate with an area of 1063 sq. miles, covering about one-fifth of the total area of then Purnea district.

8. The ownership of such newly emerging land under remained a matter of constant dispute. Even after the Survey & Settlement Operations new land was available for settlement in Purnea. Sengupta (1982) informs about such an extensive area available in Dhamadaha during 1911-20.

9. This system contained three type of successive tenurial arrangements - Jotjama, Halhasila, and Birawali, ostensibly designed by the intermediaries (see Hill, 1987).

10. Largely excluded from the day-to-day administration of the Darbhanga raj. Its isolation from the Raj is evident from the fact that for 28 years (1728-1760) Dharampur completely fell out of Darbhanga raj control and remained as a jagir of a Mughal Faujdar - Saif Khan. Though British

helped the Raj resume the estate 1760, it could never be controlled by the Raj directly. It was never easy for the British to administer this estate either.

11. Under the MSTs three groups of intermediaries were imposed upon the tillers of the land in Dharampur: *istimrar*, *milikdar* and *thikadar* (see Sengupta & Ahmad, 1978; Yadav, 1990).

12. The Darbhanga raj used to maintain big establishment of *amlas* to supervise the rents, deal with the rent-farmers and disputes with the British. Many of the rent-farmers, emerged as big landlords, by 20th century. One such instance is, the present Kursela estate of Purnea (which owns a private airdrome) acquired by Raghubansh Singh - a rent-farmer of Raja Madhav Singh of Dharampur. Kursela, Banaili, Parbatta estates, even today, are among the biggest landholders in India (Sengupta and Ahmad, 1978).

13. How, the intermediaries were worst (than the Raj) oppressive in relation to the *bataidars*, could be substantiated by the extent of the produce appropriated by them as rent and exactions appended to it. Added to this was a series of other demands like many kinds of *abwabs*, *begars*, etc.. The total exactions reduced a *bataidar's* share to less than one third of the produce. This was the position in case of food crops; for cash crops exploitative devices were different.

14. Santhal *Bataidar's* struggle for title to land during 1938-42 (see Chakraborty, 1986). Parallel to this tribal mobilization, non-tribal also got mobilized on similar issues. The stage for this *bataidari* struggle and subsequent emergence of *bataidar* and laborer as a 'class for itself' was prepared gradually in the course of *bataidar's* protest on different issues. For instance, in 1907-8, peasant protested on Produce-rent issue and out of 104 cases of commutation in Purnea district (Yadav, 1990) maximum were from Dharampur. Peasants revolted against Darbhanga Raj in 1922-23 on *abwabs* and other kind of illegal exactions, under the BPKS banner.

15. The District Census Report of 1891 substantiates this fact. It informs that though high degree of correspondence existed between the caste status and location of a person in the agrarian hierarchy, the economic elevation led them elevate their social status. See (Yadav, 1990).

16. In Purnea land survey and settlement work has been carried out more effectively than in many other parts in Bihar. Nearly 1,40,000 *bataidar* families, at least a half of the total, as occupancy *raiyyats* were recorded in the Survey (1952-60) in the whole Purnea. See (Chakraborty, 1972).

17. Because, they were threatened by the ceiling act and were scattered over distant places in other villages, making the owners position as 'absentee'.

18. Why thousands of acres still lie 'disputed' in Bihar after two decades of its redistribution, reason lies in emotional aspect rather than in material.

19. This refers to the former chief minister Laloo Pd Yadav. His wife, Rabri Devi is the present chief minister of the state and this is her second term.

20. The present ruling party, RJD.

21. The issue of land-size as a proxy for peasantry classification was first disputed by Khusaro in India as early as in 1964. Harrison (1977), Bardhan (1982), Patnaik (1987) and many others later agreed that with the development of capitalist relations and intensification of farming, farm-size becomes an increasingly inaccurate representative for the scale of farming.

22. Patnaik (1987) outlines three main reasons for this alternative methodology to capture the agrarian classes: different groups of rural households exhibit distinctly different production-organisational features; these groups are related to each other in terms of relations of exploitation, ownership / possession of the means of production and accrual of surplus; and the relation between these groups of households (economic classes) throws into relief the overall dynamic processes.

23. Under such conditions, the more remote plots were better sharecropped through agreements which provided the tenant with some incentive to maximise land use, thus avoiding for the owner

the need to supervise as well as encouraging efficient production behaviour on the part of the tenant, for higher yield.

24. Because, it was illegal and the share-croppers were aware of (much more than in other parts of north Bihar) the tenancy act which would have conferred their right over the share-cropped land after the stipulated period of 12 years.

25. Retaining as well, because, the ceiling legislation 1986 does not allow 'absentee' landowners retain land. The knowledge and awareness level about ceiling provisions has been high in this region due to bataidari struggle. This got feed back from the penetration of the left parties in the village.

26. Purnea is one of the fine quality rice-growing areas in not only Bihar but in India as well.

27. Then, in early seventies 55-60 tractors existed in Rupauli and 165 in Dhamadaha block (now a sub-division).

28. The Kosi canal irrigation system connected to the flood control embankment scheme is operated through the Bihar government irrigation bureaucracy - an elaborate hierarchy of engineers organized to manage different levels of the Kosi physical infrastructure with a matching set of officials to collect water charges.

29. The most common to the North Bihar and in parts of the Central Bihar with high water table.

30. Kesri was awarded with the best farmer certificate and free of cost HYV seeds by the district administration for successful fertilizer-use and high productivity.

31. Information about employment opportunity in Punjab was first disseminated by a group of truck-drivers of Punjab staying in Katihar district. Later, group of broker-entrepreneurs emerged for connecting local labour market to Punjab and elsewhere.

32. In Purushottampur village in Muzaffarpur district.

33. Because, having been a site for intense and prolonged nature of the Gandhian ideology oriented social reforms, the caste based inequality and discriminatory practices are eliminated to a greater extent. The middle caste dominated social matrix also helped this process.

34. Because, banana-plantation is a four-year cycle. Once planted, it is reaped for the next four consecutive years. Legal contracts are signed at the sub-divisional headquarter at Dhamadaha.

35. Such as building construction, government contract works etc. Renting-out of the urban locality based houses is a good income-source, therefore, constructing a house in Purnea for a rich peasant of Tikapatti is a profitable venture.

36. Quite often available in black market and similar is the situation with the poor accessibility of the HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides etc.

37. The slim main road between Tikapatti and Kursela has been remaining jam due to 50 and more trucks standing by the road sides to carry the produce. This disrupted public transport for about a month.

38. A sub-division of Bhagalpur district, south to the river Ganga and Kosi.

39. Because reduction in food crops reduces fire wood and banana plant is incapable of meeting this need. Its wastage cannot be used as fire wood.



## **Chapter Nine**

1. Issues related to reproductive cycle and health, female age at marriage, at first birth, the spacing of births, children's (especially girls) school enrollment and continuation beyond the primary stage of education etc. are studied under the reproductive regime.
2. This could be guessed by the fact that until before the Kosi river traversed this region no member of the Darbhanga raj family ever crossed the river to visit this area. The purohit (priest) of this family had strictly prohibited them to cross the river. (see Chakraborty, 1986; Hill, 1986).
3. Bidi, the tiny cigarette made of local leafs is heavily smoked in rural Bihar by poor men and women both.
4. The recent campaign through Radio and Doordarshan against this (mis)belief with prescribed medicine package having been made available at all the public health centers, might have some positive impact by now.
5. The source of information are local newspapers (News item published in the local Hindi daily, Hindustan, February, 25, 2000).
6. A government sponsored welfare scheme for women and children.

## **Part - IV**

## **Chapter Eleven**

1. In Arwal, the Superintendent of Police for suppressing the struggle of the poor just over 20 decimal of 'gaimajaru' (government land meant for redistribution among the landless) land ordered firing over the MKSS activists, who had established their control over the same. The firing was ordered while the activists were busy in a peaceful meeting in a high school compound fenced from all the four dimensions leaving no passage for a rescue. Altogether 19 men, women, and children were killed in this firing on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1986. This incident, then recognised as one of the most ghastly police atrocity was (is) often compared with the Jaliawala Bagh police firing in Punjab during the British rule, because the colonial police had perpetrated firing in the same fashion on 13<sup>th</sup> April leaving no exit point for the victims to escape. After this incident Jahanabad was converted into a police district.
2. The attached labour system, though prevented the labourers attached with a particular employer, whom they had to attend first, also facilitated them acquire some plot for self-cultivation for their family. This was in addition to what they were getting in lieu of their work for the employer under 'attachment' arrangements. I had talks with some of them even back in 1986 and the problem in Jahanabad then was that with mobilisation, the new 'rich' peasant employers were not ready to continue with this system as it was now 'risky' for them. The leftist academia in conformity with their 'exploitation' theory perceived and interpreted such local labouring arrangements (locally developed and practised in many parts of Bihar) as different kind of labour 'bondage' systems.

3. For instance, the old system was more of an informal nature while the new village Panchayats are a formal structure. The electoral processes constitute the basic difference between the two. This was not existing with the old system. People's consent were obtained through other local methods. Also old panchayat systems locally vary. For instance, it is called 'Paraha Panchayat' in tribal areas. The radical organisations have reincarnated Paraha Panchayats in south Bihar.

4. The Panchayat elections were conducted last in Bihar in 1978.

5. Published in the 'Jan Jwar', a Hindi Journal, No.1, Year 3, 1994, p.9.

6. Prepared and issued by the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Government of Bihar carries description of the cases of Economic Blockades in Jahanabad.

7. After Senari massacre, a convention of about 500 'massacre widows' was organised by a NGO on 8th March 1999 in Arrah. Most of them were from the upper caste groups. The 'massacre widows' from the upper castes were mobilised during parliamentary elections in 1999, moving on a bedecked Jeep - christened 'Karuna Rath' to campaign for the Ranvir Sena, which fielded its candidate under the banner of its peasant organisation from Arrah. (See, The Land of Widows, News feature by Kanhaiah Bhelari, published in The Week, April 4, 1999).

8. See 7 above.

## Chapter Twelve

1. It has been recently reported in local newspapers that Ranveer Sena has constituted women's squad from its own base and imparted training to women for armed struggle against the radical armed squads.

2. Bruner (1983:5) points out (in research methodology context) that there exists a basic story (along with the subjective analyses of the facts), which, in essence, depends on certain kinds of data such as factual information such as age, household size, number of children etc. They appear the same to all and form the backbone of the 'basic story'. See (Chapter - 6).

3. Understanding gender as an organising principle implies that just as the relations of production entails power relations between (the classes) those who employ and those who supply their labour under specific conditions and terms, in the same manner relations of reproduction entail power relations between the genders; the 'superior' gender (masculine) owns the body and the labour of the 'inferior' (feminine). See (Krishnaraj, 1996).

4. These figures are taken from Greer (2000:412).

5. Women are better managers - more nurturing, more collegial, more communicative, and more instinctual - and that these strengths mesh better with the corporate culture of teamwork and partnering which is emblematic of the information age. See (Auletta, 1998).

6. This original quote is from Dr. Ashok Mitra. Mitra spoke to Amartya Sen and Sen spoke to K. N. Raj. See, K. N. Raj, "Amartya took his concern for society forward", in: Frontline, November 6, 1998, p. 15. Special Issue on Amartya Sen after he was awarded Nobel Prize.

7. Dietrich argues that Marx speaks of the earliest sexual division of labour in the production of life itself, an activity that he himself later, 'misleadingly' termed as reproduction, creating the impression that the system of extended commodity production is primary and production of life is only the reproduction of this dominant system of commodity production. See (Dietrich, 1996).

8. The smaller section still believes in the strategy of overthrowing of the state establishment through armed struggle.

# APPENDIX FIVE - A STATISTICAL PROFILE (Purnea, Jahanabad, Bihar)

Ser. No	Headings	Total Rural Urban	Purnea (with % to their totals)	Jahanabad (with % to their totals)	Bihar (with % to their totals)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	Area (in Sq km)	T	3229	1569	173877
		R	3148.59 (97.5)	1525 (97)	170133.45 (97.85)
		U	80.41 (2.5)	43.70 (3)	3743.55 (2.15)
2.	Number of Occupied Residential Households	T	337407	159491	12833123
		R	312678 (92.6)	149536 (93.7)	11136401 (86.77)
		U	24729 (7.4)	9955 (6.3)	1696722 (13.23)
3.	Number of Households	T	346442	165393	14012071
		R	320481 (92.5)	154987 (93.7)	12175277 (86.89)
		U	25961 (7.5)	10406 (6.3)	1836794 (13.11)
4.	Total Population (includes institutional & houseless population)	T	1878885	1174900	86374465
		R	1720743 (91.6)	1100430 (93)	75021453 (86.85)
		U	158142 (8.4)	74470 (7)	11353012 (13.15)
	Gender Break Ups				
	Female	T	891644 (47.5)	562811 (48)	41172374 (47.67)
		R	818927 (91.8)	528333 (93.8)	35976358 (87.37)
		U	72717 (8.2)	34478 (6.2)	5196016 (12.63)
	Male	T	987241 (52.5)	612089 (52)	45202091 (52.33)
		R	901816 (91.3)	572097 (93.4)	39045095 (86.38)
		U	85425 (8.7)	39992 (6.6)	6156996 (13.62)
	Sex ratio	T	903	919	910 (1000)
		R	908	923	921 (1000)
		U	851	862	843 (1000)
5.	Population (0-6 Age Group)	T	404360 (21.5)	229342 (19.5)	17764186 (20.56)
		R	375388 (92.8)	215768 (94)	15775776 (88.81)
		U	28972 (7.2)	13574 (6)	1988410 (11.19)
	Gender Break Ups				
	Female	T	198542 (49.1)	112742 (49.15)	8698317 (48.96)
		R	184350 (92.8)	106210 (94.2)	7729416 (88.86)
		U	14192 (7.2)	6532 (5.8)	968901 (11.14)
	Male	T	205818 (50.9)	116600 (50.85)	9065869 (51.06)
		R	191038 (92.8)	109558 (94)	8046360 (88.75)
		U	14780 (7.2)	7042 (6)	1019509 (11.25)
	Sex ratio	T	964	967	960 (1000)
		R	960	969.5	960 (1000)
		U		928	950 (1000)

6.	Population: Main Social Groups-wise				
	(i) Scheduled Castes	T	234478 (12.5)	216083 (18.4)	12571700 (14.15)
		R	220524 (94)	205047 (94.9)	11437136 (90.98)
		U	13954 (6)	1038 (5.1)	1134564 (9.02)
	Gender Break Ups				
	Female	T	113207 (48.3)	103014 (47.7)	6002340 (47.74)
		R	106634 (94.2)	97910 (95)	5478950 (91.28)
		U	6573 (5.8)	5104 (5)	523390 (8.72)
	Male	T	121271 (51.7)	113069 (52.3)	6569360 (52.26)
		R	113890 (93.9)	107137 (94.7)	5958186 (90.70)
		U	7381 (6.1)	5932 (5.3)	611174 (9.30)
	Sex ratio	T	933 (1000)	911(1000)	914(1000)
	(ii) Scheduled Tribes	T	82145 (4.4)	238 (Migrant)	6616914 (7.66)
		R	76554 (93.2)	182	6153659 (93)
		U	5591 (6.8)	56	463255 (7)
	Gender Break Ups				
	Female	T	39549 (48.2)	90 (Migrant)	3259351 (49.26)
		R	37002 (93.5)	68	3037835 (93.21)
		U	2547 (6.5)	22	221516 (6.79)
	Male	T	42596 (51.8)	148 (Migrant)	3357563 (50.74)
		R	39552 (92.8)	114	3115824 (92.8)
		U	3044 (7.2)	34	241739 (7.2)
	Sex ratio	T	928(1000)		971(1000)
7.	Literate People	T	420593 (22.91)	433360 (36.9)	26402898 (30.56)
		R	337627 (19.62)	397285 (36.1)	20045430 (26.71)
		U	82966 (52.46)	36075 (48.4)	6357468 (56)
	Gender Break Ups		Male Literacy: 32.77% 51.09% 42%		
	Female	T	116454 (27.7)	120641 (27.84)	7434262 (28.15)
		R	85101 (25.2)	108459 (27.31)	5069688 (25.29)
		U	31053 (37.4)	12182 (33.76)	2364574 (37.19)
			Female Literacy 13.06% 21.43% 18.05%		
	Male	T	304139 (72.3)	312719 (72.16)	18968636 (71.85)
		R	252226 (74.8)	288826 (72.69)	14975742 (74.71)
		U	51913 (62.6)	23893 (66.23)	3992894 (62.81)
8.	Main Workers	T	657511 (35)	343165 (29.2)	25619038 (29.66)
		R	616064 (30.8)	324909 (29.5)	22825032 (30.42)
		U	41447 (26.2)	18256 (24.5)	2794006 (24.61)
	Gender Break Ups				
	Female	T	134330 (20.5)	63470 (18.5)	4105334 (16.02)
		R	130085 (21.1)	61909 (19.1)	3881699 (17)
		U	4245 (10.3)	1561 (8.6)	223635 (8)
	Male	T	523181 (79.5)	279695 (81.5)	21513704 (83.98)
		R	485979 (98.9)	263000 (80.9)	18943333 (83)
		U	37202 (89.7)	16695 (91.4)	2570371 (92)

	<b>(i) Cultivators</b>	T	231395 <b>(35.2)</b>	147902 <b>(43)</b>	11164519 <b>(43.57)</b>
		R	225371 (36.6)	143797 (44.26)	10904674 (47.77)
		U	6024 (14.5)	4105 (22.5)	259845 (9.3)
	<b>Gender Break Ups</b>				
	Female	T	18662 (8)	14428 (9.76)	1297085 (11.61)
		R	18255 (8.1)	14326 (10)	1278387 (11.72)
		U	407 (6.8)	102 (2.49)	18698 (7.19)
	Male	T	212733 (92)	133474 (90.24)	9867434 (88.39)
		R	207116 (91.9)	129471 (90)	9626287 (88.28)
		U	5617 (93.2)	4003 (97.5)	241147 (92.81)
	<b>(ii) Agricultural Labourer</b>	T	358571 <b>(54.53)</b>	150110 <b>(43.74)</b>	9512892 <b>(37.13)</b>
		R	349153 (56.67)	145312 (44.72)	9182366 (40.22)
		U	9418 (22.72)	4798 (26.28)	330526 (11.82)
	<b>Gender Break Ups</b>				
	Female	T	111320 (31)	46396 (30.91)	2434176 ((25.58)
		R	108934 (31.19)	45320 (31.19)	2376291 (25.87)
		U	2386 (25.33)	1076 (22.43)	57885 (17.51)
	Male	T	247251 (69)	103714 (69.09)	7078716 (74.42)
		R	240219 (68.8)	99992 (68.81)	6806075 (74.13)
		U	7032 (74.67)	3722 (77.57)	272641 (82.49)

Source: Based on the Census Abstract (1991)

# APPENDIX SIX - CENSUS ABSTRACT 1991 (Rupauli And Tikapatti)

Ser No.	Headings	Rupauli Block	Tikapatti Village	% of Col. 4 to Col 3
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	<b>Total Area</b> (in acres)	24835.74	1434.19	5.77
2.	<b>Number of Occupied Residential Houses</b>	22940.00	1577.00	6.87
3.	<b>Number of Households</b>	25014.00	1637.00	6.54
4.	<b>Total Population</b> (includes Institutional & houseless population)	141014	8933	6.33
	<b>Gender Breakup:</b> Female	66525	4229	6.35
	Male	74489	4704	6.31
	<b>Sex-ratio</b>	<b>893(1000)</b>	<b>899 (1000)</b>	
5.	<b>Population (0-6 Age Group) Total</b>	30197	1745	5.77
	Female	14857	867	5.83
	Male	15340	878	5.72
	<b>Sex-ratio</b>	<b>968.51(1000)</b>	<b>987.47 (1000)</b>	
6.	<b>Population: Main Social Groups-wise</b>			
	(i) Scheduled Caste	14912	714	4.79
	Female	7125	339	4.75
	Male	7787	376	4.82
	<b>Sex-ratio</b>	<b>915 (1000)</b>	<b>901.59 (1000)</b>	
	(ii) Scheduled Tribes	2704	339	12.53
	Female	1348	183	13.57
	Male	1356	156	11.50
	<b>Sex-ratio</b>	<b>994 (1000)</b>	<b>1173 (1000)</b>	
7.	<b>Literate People (with % to total populace)</b>	34278 (24.3)	2611 (29.2)	7.61
	Female	9027 (26.3)	734 (28.12)	8.13
	Male	25251 (73.7)	1877 (71.88)	7.43
8.	<b>Main Workers (with % to total populace )</b>	53174 (37.7)	3412 (38.2)	6.41
	Female	13310 (25)	813 (23.82)	6.10
	Male	39864 (75)	2599 (76.18)	6.51
	(i) Cultivator	20749 (39)	1212 (35.5)	5.84
	Female	1800 (8.7)	43 (3.6)	2.38
	Male	18949 (91.3)	1169 (96.4)	6.16
	(ii) Agricultural Labourer	29059 (54.6)	1878 (55.04)	6.46
	Female	11218 (38.6)	736 (39.2)	6.56
	Male	17841 (61.4)	1142 (60.8)	6.40

Total; F: Female; M: Male

## **List of Acronyms (Appendix Seven- A)**

B	-	Bigha (unit of land measurement)
BA	-	Business Asset
CST-		Central School Teacher
DGR	-	Democratic Gender Relation
ED	-	Educated
EH	-	Effective Holding
FD	-	Female Dominated
FL	-	Family Labour
FH	-	Female Headed
FS	-	Farm Supervisor
FTs	-	Family Types
GRTs	-	Gender Relation Types
H	-	Husband
HED	-	Highly Educated (Graduation & Beyond)
HL	-	Hired Labour
HST	-	High School Teacher
JF	-	Joint Family
K	-	Kattha (smaller unit of land measurement) (1 Bigha = 20 Kattha)
LI	-	Leased in
LO	-	Leased Out
MI	-	Mortgaged In
MO	-	Mortgaged Out
NF	-	Nuclear Family
O	-	Own (land)
OM	-	OutMigrant
PA/C-		Productive Assets/Cattle
PA/M-		Productive Asstes/Machine
PST	-	Primary School Teacher
Rs	-	Indian Rupees
SC	-	Share cropper
TGR	-	Traditional Gender Relation
W	-	Wife
Wr	-	Widower
W	-	Widow

Appendix Seven - A Follows...

## APPENDIX SEVEN (A)

### INCOME AND RESOURCE PROFILE: VILLAGE TIKAPATI

(Based On Structured Interviews, 1993)

CO DEs	Name (H/W) Family Profile: GRTs, FTs, ED, Land and Other PAs Cattle, Machine etc.	No of Persons (adult+child) (female+male)	Occupations (income-wise in Descending Order)	Incomes (Annual in Rs)	Total Income (Annual in Rs)	EH With forms of Labour (SC/HL/FL)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	<b>PURE AGRICULTURIST GROUPS (PGs)</b>					
	<b>BIG LANDHOLDERS: THE APEX (3 Households)</b>					
	<b>Group – A (100-125 Bigha)</b>					
A1	K M Chaudhary	8(7+1)	Farming (16 B)	70,000		
	Urnika Devi (16B)	(3+5)	Salary (HST)	65,000		
	TGR JF HED		Grove (25B)	50,000		<b>41B</b>
	T: O 112B (56B in Tikapatti and 56B in Katihar district * Pond in 10B * Cultivable 77B * Non-Culti. 35B * Descendant of Tarlahi Estate PA/C: Bullock Cart 1 Cow 3 PA/M: Tractor 1, Pumpset 1, Boring 7 Self: High School Teacher (HST) Incomplete RP		Rental (tractor)	10,000	1,95,000	<b>HL</b>
A2	N K Chaudhary	6(4+2)	Farming (60B)	1,50,000		
	Shivrani Devi	(3+3)	Grove (15B)	28,000		
	TGR NF ED		Cattle Raising	80,000		<b>75B</b>
	O112B (75B in Tikapatti, 37B in Katihar) PA/C : HUGE Bullock 21 Pairs, Buffalo 5, Cow 5 * Descendant of Tarlahi Estate * Incomplete RP		Rental (Plough)	25,000	2,83,000	<b>HL</b>
A3	Upendra Yadav	11(8+3)	Farming (105B)	2,00,000		
	Draupadi Devi	(5+6)	Grove (5.5B)	20,000		
	TGR JF ED		Cattle Raising	85,000		<b>110.5B</b>
	O 125B (LO 105B) PA/C: HUGE Bullock 12 Pairs, Buffalo 25, Cow 100 Goat 150!		Rental (Plough)	15,000	3,20,000	<b>SC+HL</b>
	<b>* The Highest Income Generating Family</b>					



	* An Upwardly					
	Mobile Entrepreneur					
	Family which earned					
	125B land through					
	Piggery over last two					
	Decades, presenting					
	A contrast to the two					
	Cases listed above					
	<b>PEASANTRY: THE RICH (6 Households)</b>					
	<b>Groups B ( 25- 50 Bigha land)</b>					
B1	Buttan Yadav	16(10+6)	Farming (20+13B)	1,00,000		
	Parmeshari (O4B)	(8+8)	Salary (PST)	36,000		
	TGR JF HED		Rental (M)	20,000		
	T: O 35B (LO 13B)		Business	12,000		35B
	PA/C: Plough 2,		Grove (2B)	10,000	1,78,000	SC+HL
	Buffalo 2					
	PA/M: Tractor,					
	Pumpset 1, Boring 3					
	BA: Transport					
	Brother: Teaching					
B2	Kalanand Mandal	10(10+0)	Farming (15B)	65,000		
	Vidya Mandal (3B) *FS	(6+4)	Banana Plantation			
	TGR JF HED		(2B)	60,000		
	T: O 25B		Salary (PST)	36,000		
	PA/M: Tractor,		Grove (3B)	15,000		20B
	Boring 3, Pumpset		Rental (tractor)	10,000	1,86,000	HL
	H: School Teacher					
B3	Tara Devi (W) *FS	4(4+0)	Farming (17+13B)	92,000		
	Vinod Mandal	(2+2)	Banana Plantation			
	FH NF ED		(1.25B)	45,000		
	O 33.25B (LO 13B)		Grove (2B)	17,000		33B
	PA/M: Tractor,		Rental (tractor)	11,000	1,65,000	SC+HL
	Boring 3, Pumpset 1					
B4	Kulanand Mandal	7(6+1)	Farming (25B)	80,000		
	Shyama Devi (2B) *FS	(3+4)	Banana Plantation			
	TGR JF HED		(2B)	65,000		
	T:O 30B(2B fallow)		Rental (thresher)	12,000		27B
	PA/C: Cow 2		Salary (a fraction)	24,000	1,81,000	HL
	PA/M: Thresher ,					
	Boring 3, Pumpset 1					
	Residential Plots in					
	Pumea (3 K)					
	Daughter: Job					
	Mukhia (headman)					
B5	Chandradeo Singh	7(6+1)	Farming (27+10B)	90,000		
	Draupadi Devi (O13B)	(3+4)	Grove (5B)	20,000		42B
						SC+HL

	TGR NF HED		Rental (M)	20,000	1,30,000	
	T: O 50B (LO 10B)					
	(MO 5B)					
	PA/C: Plough 2					
	PA/M: Tractor,					
	Boring 3, Pumpset 1					
B6	Hari Pd Yadav	15(8+7)	Farming (29B)	75,000		
	Vikhna Devi *FS	(7+8)	Banana Plantation			
	TGR JF ED		(1B)	35,000		
	O 41B (10B fallow)		Cattle Raising	10,000		
	PA/C: Buffalo 2,		Grove (1B)	4,000		31B
	Cow 2		Rental (pumpset)	2,000	1,26,000	HL
	PA/M: Pumpset 1					
	Boring 3					
	<b>MIDDLE PEASANT (31 Households)</b>					
	<b>Group – C (12-20 Bigha)</b>					
C1	Arun Kr Mandal	5(4+1)	Banana Plantation			
	Rita Mandal *FS	(3+2)	(2B)	55,000		
	FS NF ED		Food Farming			
	O12B (LO 4B)		(5+4B)	35,000		
	PA/M: Tractor		Grove (1B)	10,000		12B
	(Joint Ownership)		Rental (tractor)	3,000	1,03,000	SC+HL
C2	Bhawana Devi *FS	6(6+0)	Banana Plantation			
	Anuplal Mandal	(2+4)	(2B)	55,000		
	FD JF ED		Food Farming (8B)	40,000		
	O 12B		Grove (2B)	16,000		12B
	BA: Garment Shop		Business	14,000	1,25,000	FL+HL
C3	Bilas Mandal	7(2+5)	Farming (14B)	52,000		
	Meena Devi	(5+2)	Grove (1B)	5,000		
	TGR NF		Cattle Raising	3,000		
	O 15B		Rental (pumpset)	2,000		15B
	PA/C: Plough 2		Rental (plough)	2,000	64,000	HL
	Cow 1, Goat 7					
	PA/M: Pumpset 1					
C4	Devendra Pd	25(12+13)	Banana Plantation			
	Yashoda Devi *FS	(16+9)	(2.5B)	90,000		
	TGR JF HED		Food Farming			
	O 15B		(12B)	40,000		
	PA/M: Pumpset 1		Salary (PST)	36,000		
	Rice Mill		Rice Mill	15,000		
	Father: Freedom		Grove (0.5B)	5,000		
	Fighter (pensioner)		Pension	12,000		
	Brother: Contractor		Contract Work	20,000		15B
	H: School Teacher		Rental (pumpset)	1,000	2,24,000	HL
C5	Dinesh P Chaudhary	6(6+0)	Banana Plantation			

	Sulochana *FS	(2+4)	(2B)	60,000		
	TGR NF ED		Food Farming			
	O18.75B (LO13.5B)		(13.5B)	50,000		
	MO 1.25B (Dowry)		Grove (2B)	15,000		17.5B
	PA/C: Plough 1		Rental (plough)	1,000	1,26,000	SC+HL
C6	Jainendra Kr	7(2+5)	Banana Plantation			
	Meera Devi *FS	(3+4)	(5B)	1,40,000		
	DGR NF ED		Food Farming			
	O 18.25B		(2B)	20,000		8.25B
	(10 B Fallow)		Grove (1.25B)	10,000	1,70,000	HL
	H: Political Person					
C7	Jayprakash Mandal	6(6+0)	Farming (10+5B)	45,000		
	Shanti Devi *FS	(3+3)	Salary (PST)	36,000		17B
	FD NF ED		Grove (2B)	10,000	91,000	SC+HL
	O 20B (LO 5B)					
	(3B Fallow)					
	M: School Teacher					
C8	Jyotish Gupta	5(4+1)	Banana Plantation			
	Kalawati *FS	(2+3)	(1B)	35,000		
	FD NF ED		Food Farming(7B)	30,000		
	O 13B (5B fallow)		Pension	14,400		8B
	PA/C: Cow 1 Goat 5		Cattle Raising	2,000	81,400	HL
	Mother(W) Freedom					
	Fighter/ (Pensioner)					
C9	Khokha Mandal	6(6+0)	Farming			
	Janaki Devi	(2+4)	(19.5B+2B)	51,000		
	FD JF ED		Grove (2B)	10,000		
	O 22B MI 2B		Cattle Raising	4,000		
	PA/C: Cow 1 Goat 6		Coaching Work	2,500		
	PA/M: Pumpset		Rental (pumpset)	2,000		24B
			Straw (0.5B)	1,500	71,000	HL
C10	Lalbahadur Mandal	5(2+3)	Food Farming			
	Indu Mandal *FS	(2+3)	(7.5+3B)	45,000		
	TGR NF ED		Banana Plantation			
	O 13B (LO 3B)		(1B)	30,000		
	PA/C: Cow1, Goat 5		Grove (1.5B)	15,000		13B
	PA/M: Tractor		Cattle Raising	2,000	92,000	SC+HL
	(Joint Ownership)					
C11	Madhuri Devi (W)	3(3+0)	Farming (6+6B)	40,000		
	Santosh Kr	(2+1)	Grove (3B)	10,000		15B
	FH NF HED		Pension	12,000	62,000	SC+HL
	O 15B (LO 6B)					
	Self: Pension Holder					
C12	Naresh Gupta	6(5+1)	Banana Plantation			

	Uma Devi *FS	(1+5)	(4B)	1,05,000		
	FD NF ED		Food Farming(8B)	32,000		15B
	O 15B		Grove (3B)	10,000	1,47,000	HL
	Father (Wr)					
C13	Purushottam Kesari	4(3+1)	Farming (12B)	60,000		
	Bachhi Kesari *FS	(1+3)	Salary (PST)	36,000		13B
	FD NF ED		Grove (1B)	5,000	1,01,000	HL
	O 13B					
	Self: School Teacher					
C14	Ramdeo Verma	11(6+5)	Farming (10B)	43,000		
	Vimla Devi	(6+5)	Pension	14,000		12B
	DGR JF ED		Grove(2B)	9,000	66,000	HL
	O 12B					
	Father: Pensioner					
C15	Sudhir Kr Mandal	8(5+3)	Banana Plantation			
	Savita Mandal	(2+6)	(2B)	62,200		
	DGR NF HED		Farming (8+10B)	40,000		
	O 20B (LO 10B)		Salary	14,000		20B
	F: Health Worker		Straw	2,500	1,18,700	SC+HL
C16	Madan Mandal	4(4+0)	Farming (12B)	32,000		12B
	Sunita Devi *FS	(2+2)	Medical Practice	15,000	47,000	SC
	FH JF HED					
	O 12B (all LO)					
	Mother (W)					
	Father in-law(Wr)					
	Self: Homeopath					
	Doctor					
C17	Veemarain Mandal	13(7+6)	Farming (9+6B)	60,000		
	Premalata Mandal	(5+8)	Rental (Thresher)	15,000		15B
	TGR JF ED		Cattle Raising	5,000	80,000	SC+HL
	O15B (LO 6B)					
	(Sold out 0.5B for son's employment;					
	1B for daughter's Marriage; 1B for wife's ailment cure)					
	PA/C: Cow1 Goat10					
	PA/M: Thresher					
C18	Vijay Mandal	11(6+5)	Farming (6B)	32,000		
	Pramila Devi	(5+6)	Grove (2B)	10,000		
	TGR JF ED		Pension	12,000		8B
	O 12B (4B Fallow)		Cattle Raising	3,000	58,000	HL
	PA/C: Cow, Goats					
	PA/M: Pumpset					
	Father in-law(Wr)					
	(freedom fighter &					

	Pensioner)					
	<b>Group-D (8-12 Bigha)</b>					
D1	Brahmadeo Mandal	7(4+3)	Farming (8B)	17,000		
	Kausalya (O1B)	(3+4)	Rental (house)	7,000		
	TGR NF ED		Grove (1B)	4,000		9B
	T: O 9B (LO 8B)		Father in-law	2,000	30,000	SC
	* Father in-law (Wr)					
D2	Janardan Mandal	5(4+1)	Banana Plantation			
	Vimla Devi *FS	(2+3)	(2B)	55,000		
	FD NF ED		Food Farming			
	O 10B + LI 2B		(5B)	30,000		
	@ R 2000 pa, LO 5B		LO (5B)	13,000		
	PA/C: Plough 1		Business	12,000		12B
	BA: Medicine Store		Rental (plough)	1,500	1,11,500	SC+HL
D3	Karamchand Mandal	5(2+3)	Farming (3.5+6B)	30,000		
	Mochna Devi	(3+2)	Grove (1.5B)	6,000		11B
	DGR NF ED		Rental (plough)	2,000	38,000	SC+FL
	O 11B (LO 6B)					
	PA/C: Plough 1					
D4	Shital Ravidas	16(9+7)	Farming (10B)	34,000		
	Uma Devi	(9+7)	Rental (plough)	4,000		
	TGR JF		Rental (pumpset)	3,000		
	O 8.5B MI 1.5B		Milk Selling	5,000		10B
	PA/C: Plough 2		Cattle Raising	2,000	48,000	FL+HL
	Buff.3, Cow2, Goat4					
	PA/M: Pumpset 1					
	Boring 3					
	* Harijan Family					
D5	Sunil Mandal	5(2+3)	Farming (11B)	80,000		12B
	Uma Mandal *FS	(2+3)	Grove (1B)	5,000	85,000	FL+HL
	FD NF ED					
	O 12B					
	Enterprising Family					
D6	Upendra Mandal	5(3+2)	Farming (4B+5B)	35,000		9B
	Laxmi	(2+3)	Cattle Raising	5,000	40,000	SC+HL
	TGR NF ED					
	O 9B (LO 5B)					
	PA/C: Cow1Goat 12					
	Mother (W)					
	<b>Group - E (4-8 Bigha)</b>					
E1	Ajay Kr Mandal	3(2+1)	Banana Plantation	40,000		
	Geeta Devi *FS	(2+1)	(1.5B)			

	DGR NF ED		Food Farming	25,000		
	O 7.5B		(5B)			
	PA/M: Tractor (Joint		Grove (1B)	5,000		
	Ownership) Boring 1		Rental (tractor)	5,000		7.5B
	PA/C: Buffalo 2,		Cattle Raising	8,000	83,000	FL+HL
	Goat 12, Hen 12					
E2	Krishnadeo Yadav	7(3+4)	Farming (6B)	36,000		6.5B
	Sita Devi	(2+5)	Grove (0.5B)	5,000	41,000	FL+HL
	FD NF ED					
	O 7.5B MO 1B					
	Self: Political Person					
E3	Mahendra Mandal	6(2+4)	Farming (6.25B)	29,200		
	Dulari Devi	(2+4)	Milk Selling	7,000		
	TGR NF		Cattle Raising	1,500		6.25B
	O 4.5B + LI 1.75B		Rental (plough)	1,500	39,200	FL+HL
	PA/C: Plough 1,					
	Cow 3, Goat 5					
E4	Niranjan Mandal	4(2+2)	Farming (6B)	32,000		6.5B
	Kiran Devi	(2+2)	Grove (0.5B)	9,000	41,000	FL+HL
	FD NF					
	O 5B + LI 1.5B					
E5	Shaligram Mandal	8(5+3)	Farming (4B)	25,000		5B
	Madhuri Devi	(5+3)	Grove (1B)	9,000	34,000	FL
	TGR NF ED					
	O 5B					
E6	Upendra Paswan	6(2+4)	Farming (4B)	20,000		4B
	Nilam Paswan *FS	(3+3)	Social Work	5,000	25,000	FL
	FD NF					
	O 4B					
	H: Social Worker					
E7	Maheshwar Mandal	6(5+1)	Farming (6B)	36,400		6B
	Rambha Devi	(3+3)	Cattle Raising	3,000	39,400	FL
	TGR JF HED					
	O 6B					
	PA/C: Goat 12					
<b>SMALL PEASANTS (25 Households)</b>						
<b>Group – F (1-4 Bigha)</b>						
F1	Adhiklal Mandal	5(3+2)	Farming (19K)	6,000		
	Sharda Devi	(2+3)	Labour	2,500		
	DGR NF		Florist Business	1,800		1B
	O 1.25B		Grove (1K)	700	11,000	FL
	A Florist Family					
F2	Bedanand Yadav	4(3+1)	Farming (1.5B)	10,000		

	Rajo Devi	(2+2)	Labour	6,000		1.5B
	TGR NF ED		Cattle Raising	2,000	18,000	FL
	O 2B (10K MO for - ailment treatment)					
	PA/C: Goat 6, Hen 8					
F3	Gunsagar Ravidas	6(3+3)	Farming (1.25B)	7,000		
	Konia Devi	(2+4)	Labour	4,000		
	TGR NF		Rental	2,500		1.25B
	O1.25B		Cattle Raising	2,000	15,500	FL
	PA/C: Plough 1, Goat 6					
F4	Jwala Pd Mandal	6(6+0)	Farming (2.5B)	12,000		
	Lukhi Devi	(4+2)	LO (1B)	1,700		
	TGR NF ED		Grove (0.5B)	2,000		3B
	O 4B (LO 1B)		Cattle Raising	500	16,200	FL
	<b>* Reverse Tenancy</b>					
F5	Narain Mandal	9(7+2)	Farming (3B)	16,000		
	Bimla Devi	(3+6)	Remittance	7,800		
	TGR NF ED		Tea stall	3,600		3B
	O 2B		Cattle Raising	1,000	28,400	FL
	1B MI (sudbhama)					
	<b>* daughter Usha</b>					
	<b>Deserted</b>					
	<b>OM: Bombay (son)</b>					
	<b>13 bigha sold out for</b>					
	<b>Dowry payment</b>					
F6	Radho Mandal	6(3+3)	Farming (2.5B)	15,000		
	Manju Mandal	(5+1)	Spinning	3,000		
	FD NF ED		Grove (0.5B)	1,800		3B
	O 3B		Cattle Raising	1,500	21,300	FL
	<b>Mother (W)</b>					
F7	Saryug Muni	5(5+0)	Farming (1B)	6,000		
	Parwati	(2+3)	Labour	5,000		
	TGR JF		Grove (4K)	3,000		
	O 1B 4K		Milk Selling	3,000		1B4K
	PA/C: Cow2 Goat 6		Cattle Raising	2,000	19,000	FL
<b>Share Croppers (With Land / Increasing EH)</b>						
F8	Chhedi Mandal	6(2+4)	Farming (4B)	14,000		
	Ramrupa Devi	(2+4)	Cattle Raising	1,500		4B
	TGR NF		Rental (Plough)	800	16,300	FL
	O 2B + LI 2B					
	PA/C: Plough 1					
	Goat 2					
F9	Kailash Ram	6(6+0)	Banana Planting	35,000		
	Krishna Devi	(3+3)	(1.5B)			

	FD JF		Food farming	10,000		
	O 1.5B + LI 3B		(4B)			5.5B
	+ MI 1B		Cattle Raising	9,000	54,000	FL+HL
	PA/C: Buffalo, Cow,					
	Goat & Hen					
	<i>Enterprising Family</i>					
F10	Khokha Mandal	13(7+6)	Farming (4B)	16,000		
	Tami Devi	(5+8)	Rental (Plough)	2,000		
	TGR JF		Milk Selling	4,000		4B
	O 3B + LI 1B		Cattle Raising	2,000	24,000	FL
	PA/C: Plough 1,					
	Buffalo 1, Cow 1,					
	Goat 5, Hen 2					
F11	Khokan Mandal	8(6+2)	Farming (4B)	18,000		
	Hema Devi	(5+3)	Bidi Making	9,000		
	DGR JF ED		Milk Selling	4,000		
	O 2B + LI 2B		Rental	2,000		4B
	Plough 1,		Cattle Raising	1,500	34,500	FL
	Buffalo 2, Goat 6					
F12	Mahanthlal Sharma	9(5+4)	Farming (5B)	15,000		
	Jhakia Devi	(5+4)	Remittance	4,000		5.5B
	TGR JF		Grove (0.5B)	2,000	21,000	FL
	O 1.5B + LI 4B					
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
F13	Saryug Pd Muni	7(6+1)	Farming (3B)	12,000		
	Laxmi Devi	(3+4)	Remittance	6,000		3B
	TGR JF		Cattle Raising	2,000	20,000	FL
	O 1B + LI 2B					
	<b>OM: Punjab</b>					
	(Seasonal) for					
	Loan Payment					
F14	Sikandar Mandal	7(3+4)	Food Farming(3B)	16,000		3.5B
	Pramila Devi	(4+3)	Banana (0.5B)	15,000	31,000	FL+HL
	TGR NF					
	O 1.5B + LI 2B					
	<i>Father (Wr)</i>					
	<b>Group – G (0-1 Bigha)</b>					
F15	Chetan Mandal	7(5+2)	Farming (2B)	9,000		
	Ahilya Devi	(3+4)	Rental (cattle)	2,500		
	DGR NF		Cattle Raising	3,000		2B
	O 10K + LI 2B		Spinning	2,000	16,500	FL
	PA/C: Bullock 2,					
	Buffalo 2					
	Goat 3, Hen 4					
	<b>10 K (sudbharna)</b>					
F16	Dinesh Kr Mandal	4(2+2)	Farming (3.5B)	15,920		
	Sukumari Devi	(1+3)	Milk Selling	2,000		3.5B
	TGR NF ED		Cattle Raising	700	18,620	FL



	O 1B + LI 3B					
	10 K(sudbharna)					
	PA/C: Goat 6					
F17	Khantar Sah	4(3+1)	Farming (13 K)	6,000		13K FL
	Dayapriya	(2+2)	Labour	4,000	10,000	
	DGR NF					
	O 13K					
	Mother (W)					
F18	Kishori Sah					
	Maya Devi	3(2+1)	Farming (2.75 B)	13,100		2.75B FL
	TGR NF	(1+2)	Rental (Plough)	1,200		
	O 15K + LI 2B		Cattle Raising	700	15,000	
	PA/C:Plough1Goat 2					
F19	Lakho Mahaldar	8(5+3)	Farming (3 B)	17,000		3B FL
	Phenkani Devi	(3+5)	Milk Selling	4,000		
	TGR NF		Cattle Raising	1,000	22,000	
	O 15K + LI 3 B					
	12 K (sudbharna)					
	PA/C: Cow 2 Goat 2					
F20	Umesh Yadav	6(3+3)	Farming (2B)	9,000		2B FL
	Ranju Devi	(4+2)	Labour	8,000		
	TGR NF		Milk Selling	5,000	22,000	
	O 10K + LI 2B					
	10K (sudbharna)					
	PA/C: Buffalo 2					
F21	Shyamlal Ravidas	5(4+1)	Labour	7,000		10K FL
	Asani Devi	(1+4)	Farming (0.5B)	3,000		
	DGR NF		Cattle Raising	2,000		
	O 10K		Milk Selling	2,000	14,000	
	PA/C: Cow 2 Goat 4					
Petty Share Cropper [Without Land , with Increased EH]						
F22	Ashok Kr Mandal	7(5+2)	Farming (6B)	18,000		6B FL
	Punam Devi	(3+4)	Business	7,000		
	TGR JF		Cattle Raising	500	25,000	
	LI 6B					
	Petty Business					
F23	Bhola Mandal	3(2+1)	Farming (2.5B)	7,000		2.5B FL
	Radha	(1+2)	Labour	2,500		
	DGR NF		Rental (Plough)	2,500	12,000	
	LI 2.5B					
	PA/C: Plough 1					
F24	Dukhan Mandal	6(5+1)	Farming (4B)	12,000		4B FL
	Chano Devi	(4+2)	Rental (Plough)	3,500	15,500	
	DGR JF					
	LI 4B 3K					
	PA/C: Plough 1					

F25	Kailu Muni	6(3+3)	Farming (5B)	16,400		
	Phulwati	(3+3)	Cattle Raising	5,000		5B
	TGR NF		Labour	4,000	25,400	FL
	LI 5B					
	PA/C: Goat 4, Hen 6					
	<b>LANDLESS: THE BOTTOM (20 Households)</b>					
	<b>Group: G</b>					
G1	Bandhu Ravidas	10(6+4)	Labour	15,000		
	Shyama Devi	(5+5)	Banihari	10,200		
	DGR JF		Cattle Raising	3,000	28,200	N A
	Father (Wr)					
G2	Batahia Devi	6(5+1)	Labour	7,000		
	Widow	(5+1)	Banihari	2,000		
	FH JF		Food Processing	1,000	10,000	N A
G3	Chamru Mandal	5(3+2)	Labour	8,500		
	Jhakia Devi	(3+2)	Food Processing	1,000	9,500	N A
	DGR NF					
G4	Devendra Sharma	5(3+2)	Labour	9,000		
	Rukmini Devi	(2+3)	Banihari	2,000	11,000	N A
	DGR NF ED					
G5	Dhuri Mandal	2(2+0)	Labour	5,000		
	Vimla Devi	(1+1)	Cattle Raising	4,000	9,000	N A
	DGR NF					
G6	Gijal Ravidas	7(4+2)	Labour	9,000		
	Gulia Devi	(4+3)	Cattle Raising	2,000	11,000	N A
	DGR NF					
G7	Puran Ravidas	6(4+2)	Labour	13,000		
	Kumani Devi	(3+3)	Old Age Pension	1,200	14,200	N A
	FD JF					
G8	Sumitra Devi (W)	4(3+1)	Banihari	6,000		
	FH JF ED	(2+2)	Coaching	4,000		
			Food Processing	2,500		
			Cattle Raising	500	13,000	N A
G9	Suresh Paswan	4(2+2)	Labour	8,000		
	Indira Devi	(3+1)	Cattle Raising	300	8,300	N A
	DGR NF [5K(MO)]					
G10	Jagdeo thakur	6(4+2)	Jajmani	7,000		
	Pato Devi	(3+3)	Labour	5,000		
	DGR JF		Cattle Raising	2,000	14,000	N A
G11	Jawachhia Devi	5(2+3)	Labour	7,200		
	Bachhi Thakur	(2+3)	Jajmani	1,100		
	FH NF		Cattle Raising	800	9,100	N A
	<b>Remittance Hoder</b>					
G12	Hisabi Mandal	8(5+3)	Remittance	12,000		

	Kisa Devi	(3+5)	Labour	10,000		
	FD JF		Cattle Raising	2,000	24,000	N A
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G13	Kamlu Sah	5(3+2)	Timber Business	6,000		
	Sushila	(2+3)	Plantation	5,000		
	FH NF		Remittance	5,000	16,000	N A
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G14	Karu Mandal	4(3+1)	Poultry	10,000		
	Chania Devi	(1+3)	Banihari	9,000		
	FH NF (Poultry)		Remittance	7,000	26,000	N A
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G15	Kismat Baitha	7(3+4)	Labour	14,000		
	Kitabia Khatoon	(3+4)	Remittance	10,000		
	FH NF		Cattle Raising	1,500	25,000	N A
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G16	Lalita Devi (W)	2(2+0)	Remittance	7,000		
	Umesh (son)	(1+1)	Labour	1,500	8,500	N A
	FH NF					
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G17	Mania Devi (W)	5(4+1)	Labour	6,000		
	Daughter (W)	(3+2)	Remittance	3,000		
	FH JF		Banihari	2,000	11,000	N A
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G18	Rajkumar Jaiswal	3(3+0)	Petty Business	9,000		
	Nirmala Devi	(1+2)	Remittance	8,000	17,000	N A
	FH NF ED					
	<b>OM: Delhi (son)</b>					
G19	Sikandar Chaudhary	7(4+3)	Remittance	18,000		
	Ahilya Devi	(4+3)	Bidi Making	14,000		
	DGR JF ED		Banihari	3,500	35,000	N A
	<b>OM: Punjab (son)</b>					
G20	Tarini Devi (W)	3(2+1)	Remittance	12,000		
	FH NF	(2+1)	Labour	4,800	16,800	NA
	<b>OM: Punjab</b>					

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	<b>COMPOSITE GROUPS (CGs)</b>					
	<b>THE RICH PEASANT (4 Households)</b>					
	<b>Group –B (12-20 Bigha)</b>					
B1	Naresh C Kesari	6(4+2)	Salary	60,000		
	Bachhi Kesari *FS	(3+3)	Farming (24B)	50,000		24B
	FM NF ED		Rental (generator)	6,000	1,16,000	SC+HL
	O 12B +LI 12B					
	(Contract) LO 24B					
	PA/M: Generator					
	H: Overseer (Bhagalpur)					
B2	Suresh C Kesari	7(5+2)	Salary	65,000		
	Chhavi Kesari *FS	(6+1)	Farming (20B)	45,000		20B
	DGR NF ED		Business	40,000	1,50,000	SC
	O 20B (LO 20B)					
	H: ADO (Dewaria)					
	BA: Medicine Store					
B3	Vikramaditya Tiwari	23(20+3)	Salary (1) PST	36,000		
	Geeta Tiwari *FS	(9+14)	Salary (2) PST	36,000		
	TGR JF HED		Salary (3)	34,000		
	O 17B (LO 14B)		Farming (14B)	45,000		17B
	PA/C: Plough 2		Grove (3B)	8,000	1,59,000	SC+FL
	H: School Teacher					
	W: School Teacher					
	Brother: Railway Job					
	* Single Brahmin Family					
B4	Virendra Mandal	16(10+6)	Business	1,45,000		
	Sheila Devi *FS	(7+9)	Banana Plantation			
	TGR JF ED		(5B)	1,20,000		
	O 15 B		Food Farming			
	PA/C: Goat 10Cow1		(4B)	30,000		
	BA: Video Hall,		Salary	24,000		
	Transport, Stationary		Cattle Raising	5,000		10B
	Shop		Grove(1B)	4,500	3,28,500	HL+FL
	Brother: Job					
	<b>* Family Generating the Highest Income (exceeds the Big Landholders)</b>					
	<b>MIDDLE PEASANT (27 Households)</b>					
	<b>Group – C (4-12 Bigha)</b>					
C1	Draupadi Devi (W) *FS	2(2+0)	Business	40,000		5B
	FH NF ED	(1+1)	Farming (5B)	15,000	55,000	SC
	O 5B (LO 5B)					
	BA: Mill & Spiller					

C2	Girivar Mandal	5(5+0)	Salary (PST)	36,000		11B
	Sunita Mandal *FS	(2+3)	Farming (11B)	24,800	60,800	SC
	FD NF HED					
	O 11B (LO 11B)					
	H: School Teacher					
C3	Indradeo Mandal	7(5+2)	Salary (PST)	36,000		
	Nirmala Devi *FS	(4+3)	Farming (5.5B)	24,000		
	FD NF ED		Grove (0.5B)	5,000		6B
	O 6B		Cattle Raising	1,500	66,500	FL+HL
	PAVC: Cow 1 Goat 4					
C4	Jagdish Thakur	20(12+8)	Salary	32,664		
	Jeera Devi *FS	(9+11)	Salary	31,200		
	DGR JF HED		Farming (6B)	23,000		
	O 6B, 5.75K residential &		Salary	18,000		
	Market Plots worth Rs 2.15		Emolument (Inst.)	4,000		
	Lakh, under Construction		Pension	7,500		6B
	<b>Job Profile:</b>		Cattle Raising	1,500	1,17,864	FL
	* 2 Male School Teacher					
	* 2 Male In Peon's Job					
	* 1 Female Adult Ed. Instructor					
	<b>Social Profile:</b>					
	* Anti Dowry, anti- Caste,					
	exceptionally progressive					
	<b>Barber</b> caste Family					
C5	Jainarain Mandal	5(4+1)	Salary	34,000		5B
	Manorama Devi *FS	(2+3)	Farming (3+2B)	16,000	50,000	SC+FL
	TGR NF ED					
	O 5B (LO 2B)					
	H: Postmaster					
	Mother (W)					
C6	Krityanand Mandal	5(4+1)	Salary	28,000		
	Savita Mandal *FS	(2+3)	Farming (5B)	17,000		7B
	DGR NF HED		Grove (2B)	10,000	55,000	SC+FL
	O7B (LO 5B)					
	H: Assistant in local					
	Post Office					
C7	Navin Kr Mandal	5(3+2)	Salary (Nurse)	25,000		5B
	Phool Kumari	(4+1)	Farming (5B)	16,000	41,000	SC
	FD NF ED					
	O 5B (LO 5B)					
	W: Nurse					

C8	R P Singh	18(6+12)	Salary (1)	52,000		
	Sudha Devi	(8+10)	Salary (2)	28,800		
	FS JF HED		Farming (5B)	16,000		
	O 6B (LO 5B)		Pension	9,720		
	PA/C: Cow 1 Goat 5		Grove (1B)	3,000		6B
	*5K Residential land In Purnea		Cattle Raising	1,000	1,10,520	SC+FL
	Jointly Owned with Wife					
	H: Principal (High School)					
	W: Assist. Teacher					
	F: Retd. Official					
C9	Pratap N Mandal	5(4+1)	Salary	36,000		
	Sunita Mandal *FS	(2+3)	Farming (5B)	29,600		6B
	FD NF ED		Grove (1B)	2,000	67,000	FL+HL
	O 6B					
	H: School Teacher					
C10	Satya N Mandal	6(4+2)	Salary (PST)	28,800		
	Shashikala *FS	(3+3)	Farming (3B)	12,000		
	DGR NF ED		Banana (5K)	10,000		3.5B
	O 6.5B (3B fallow)		Grove (5K)	1,500	52,300	FL+HL
	H: School Teacher					
C11	Suresh Yadav	6(3+3)	Salary (PST)	28,800		
	Neera Devi *FS	(2+4)	Farming (5B)	20,000		5B7K
	DGR NF ED		Grove (7K)	4,000	52,800	FL+HL
	O 10B (3B fallow), MI 1B					
	H: School Teacher					
	<b>Group -D (0-4 Bigha)</b>					
D1	Anandi Pd Mandal	4(4+0)	Salary (CST)	42,000		
	Asha Mandal	(2+2)	Salary (Nurse)	36,000		1B
	FH NF HED		Farming (1B)	2,000	80,000	SC
	O 1B (LO 1B)					
	H: School Teacher (Jamalpur)					
	W: Nurse (Naugachhia)					
	Son: Engineering student					
D2	Bindesar Chaudhary	8(2+6)	Salary (PST)	36,000		1B
	Rekha Chaudhary *FS	(4+4)	Farming (1B)	3,000	39,000	SC
	FD NF ED					
	O 1B (LO 1B)					
	H: School Teacher (Araria)					
D3	Govind Mandal	10(6+4)	Cattle Business	19,000		
	Parwati Devi *FS	(4+6)	Electrical Business	17,000		
	TGR JF ED		Banana Plantation			

	O 2.5B (LI 12K)		(12K)	16,000		
	PA/C: Bullock 2,		Food Farming(2B)	10,000		
	Buffalo 2, Goat 5, Hen 10		Grove (0.5B)	6,000		3B2K
	BA: Radio/TV Repair/ Servicing		Musical Perform.	2,000	70,000	FL+HL
	Woman Musician					
D4	Gyani Rajak	8(5+3)	Salary (PST)	36,000	36,000	N A
	Radha Rajak	(3+5)				
	<b>DGR NF ED</b>					
	H: School Teacher					
	<i>* From Washerman Community</i>					
	<i>* Exceptionally Progressive</i>					
D5	K D Mandal	6(4+2)	Business	45,000		
	Chandra Devi	(3+3)	Rental (generator)	6,000		
	<b>DGR NF ED</b>		Cattle Raising	1,000	52,000	N A
	BA: 2 Mills (Flour & Rice)					
	PA/C: Goat 4					
	PA/M: Generator					
	<b>*16B sold out for</b>					
	<b>Marriage of seven</b>					
	<b>Daughters in 80s.</b>					
D6	Kripal Sah	9(5+4)	Salary (PST)	34,000		
	Manorama Sah <b>*FS</b>	(6+3)	Farming (3B)	15,000		
	TGR JF ED		Grove (7K)	10,000		3B7K
	O 4B (LO 0.5B for		LO (0.5B)	2,000	61,000	FL+HL
	Banana Plantation					
	@ Rs. 2,000 p.a.					
	H: School Teacher					
D7	Mahendra Kumar	5(3+2)	Business	35,000		3B
	Ranjana Devi <b>*FS</b>	(2+3)	Farming (3B)	14,000	49,000	FL
	<b>FD NF ED</b>					
	O 3B					
	BA: Garment Shop					
	<i>Father (Wr)</i>					
D8	Mohital Yadav	5(4+1)	Salary (PST)	36,000		
	Ahilya Devi <b>*FS</b>	(2+3)	Farming (6.25B)	16,000		7.75B
	<b>DGR NF ED</b>		Grove (1.5B)	9,000	61,000	SC+FL
	O 7.75B (1.5B in					
	Tikapatti, rest in					
	Dumar) LO 6.25B					
	H: School Teacher					
D9	Ramnarain Toofan	7(5+2)	Salary (PST)	28,400		
	Shivarani Devi	(3+4)	Pension	18,000		3B
						SC

	DGR JF HED		Farming (3B)	10,000	56,400	
	O 3B (LO 3B)					
	W: School Teacher					
	H: Pension Holder					
	Political & Socially					
	Active Family					
	Son: Prabhat ( politics)					
D10	Shaligram Singh	8(6+2)	Salary (PST)	36,000		2B
	Sharmila Singh *FS	(6+2)	Farming (2B)	15,000	51,000	FL
	FD NF HED					
	O 2B					
	H: School Teacher					
D11	Dr. Sudhir K Mandal	6(2+4)	Salary (LHV)	30,000		
	Meena Das (O 5K)	(2+4)	Medical Practice	18,000		1B
	DGR NF ED		Banana Plantation	35,000	83,000	HL
	T: O 5K (LI 1B)		(1B)			
	W:Health Worker					
	H: Doctor					
D12	Sukhay Mandal	6(2+4)	Salary (HST)	45,000		
	Devati Devi *FS	(2+4)	Farming (3.5B)	10,000		
	TGR NF ED		Grove (0.5B)	4,000		4B
	O 4B (LO 3.5B)		Milk Selling	3,000	62,000	SC+FL
	PA/C: Cow 3					
	PA/M: Boring 1					
	H: School Teacher					
D13	Sushil K Mandal	6(6+0)	Salary (HST)	55,000		0.5B
	Kanti Devi	(4+2)	Grove (0.5B)	5,000	60,000	FL
	FD NF HED					
	O 0.5B					
	H: School Teacher					
	(Araria)					
D14	Triveni Poddar	6(6+0)	Salary (PST)	36,000		
	Nirmala Poddar	(2+4)	Business	20,000		
	FD NF HED		Medical Practice	6,000	62,000	N A
	BA: Garment Shop					
	W: School Teacher					
	H: Homeopath					
	Doctor					
D15	Vijay K Mandal	5(2+3)	Flour Mill	32,000		
	Dharmsheela	(3+2)	Mechanical Work	15,000	47,000	N A
	FD NF ED					
	O 4B					
	(Given to Brother)					



	BA: Flour Mill, Mechanical Skill					
D16	Vinod K Mandal	4(2+2)	Salary (HST)	43,000		2B
	Usha Kiran *FS	(2+2)	Farming (2B)	8,000	51,000	FL
	DGR NF ED					
	O 2B					
	H: School Teacher					
	<b>SMALL PEASANT (9 Households)</b>					
	<b>GROUP-E (0-1 Bigha)</b>					
E1	Bateshwar Mandal	6(4+2)	Bee-keeping	15,000		
	Kalawati	3+3)	Spinning	5,000		
	DGR NF		Farming (0.5B)	4,000		0.5B
	O 0.5B		Cattle Raising	300	24,300	FL
	Bee-Keeper					
E2	Bhajju Laheri	18(9+9)	Business	20,000		1B
	Sharda Devi	(10+8)	Farming (1B)	5,000	25,000	FL
	DGR JF					
	O 0.5B (MI 0.5B					
	@ Rs. 3,000 pa)					
	BA: Bangle Seller					
E3	Bindeshwari Hari	5(2+3)	Sweeper Work	12,000		
	Paramila Devi	(2+3)	Piggery	5,000		
	DGR NF		Vegitable Farming			0.5B
	O 0.5B (Government		(0.5B)	3,000	20,000	FL
	Land)					
	BA: Piggery					
	Job: Sweeper					
E4	Dasarath Chaudhary	14(8+6)	Bettle Shop	10,000		
	Dulari Devi	(5+9)	Bidi Making	8,000		
	FD JF ED		Farming (3B)	8,000		
	LI 3B		Remittance	6,500		3B
	BA: Betel Shop		Labour	2,500	35,000	FL
	OM: Punjab (son)					
E5	Jagdish Pd Sah	5(3+2)	Medical Practice	6,000		
	Sulekha Sah	(2+3)	Farming (1.5B)	5,500		1.5B
	DGR NF ED		Coaching Work	1,200	12,700	FL
	LI 1.5B					
	H: Homeopath					
	Doctor					
	W: Coaching					

E6	Hami Devi (W)	3(3+0)	Washing	9,000		
	FH NF	(2+1)	Cattle Raising	3,500		0.5B
	LI 0.5B		Farming (0.5B)	2,500	15,000	FL
	Washerman Family					
	PA/C: Goat 12,					
	Hen 10					
E7	Kripanath Mandal	5(3+2)	Fishing	12,000		1.5B
	Kupo Devi	(2+3)	Farming (1.5B)	9,000	21,000	FL
	DGR NF					
	LI 1.5B					
E8	Nand Kishore	12(7+5)	Business	15,000		
	Kalia Devi	(7+5)	Farming (1.5B)	9,000		
	DGR JF ED		Bidi Making	4,000		1.5B
	O 1.5B		Cattle Raising	2,000	30,000	FL
	PA/C: Cow 2 Goat2					
	Petty Business					
E9	Ramrup Ravidas	8(4+4)	Shoe-making	15,000		
	Neero Devi	(2+6)	Farming (1.5B)	7,000		
	DGR JF		Pension	1,200		1.5B
	O 1.5B		Cattle Raising	500	23,700	FL
	PA/M: Shoe-making					
	Machine					
	PA/C: Hen 6					
	Father (Old Age					
	Pension Holder)					
<b>LANDLESS ( 11 Households)</b>						
<b>Group – F</b>						
F1	Bhagwan Jaiswal	5(4+1)	Petty Shop	10,000		
	Sushila	(1+4)	Tumtum Pulling	8,000	18,000	N A
	DGR NF ED					
	BA: Stationary Shop					
F2	Kamleswari Mandal	6(3+3)	Timber Business	10,000		
	Rani Devi	(1+5)	Milk Selling	6,000		
	DGR NF		Labour	4,000	20,000	N A
	PA/C: Buffalo 3, Goat 1					
	BA: Timber Shop					
F3	Mahendra Mandal	5(4+1)	Artisan	8,000		
	Sushma	(2+3)	Bidi Making	1,500	9,500	N A
	DGR NF (Artisan family)					

F4	Mahesh Thakur	3(2+1)	Coaching	7,000		
	Basanti	(1+2)	Cattle Raising	2,000		
	FD NF		Stiching	1,200	10,200	N A
	PA/C: Goat 6 Hen 10					
F5	Manohar Thakur	10(7+3)	Saloon	13,000		
	Manorama	(4+6)	Stiching	12,000		
	TGR JF ED		Jajmani	4,000		
	* Barber Family		Coaching	2,400		
	Tailoring Job as well		Cattle Raising	500	31,900	N A
F6	Phuleshwar Sah	7(5+2)	Tumtum Pulling	8,000		
	Kausalya	(4+3)	Milk Selling	1,000	9,000	N A
	TGR JF					
	PA/C: Goat 6					
	BA: Tumtum					
	*Case of Indebtedness					
	Rs 2,600 @ 96% pa Interest					
F7	Potasia Devi (W)	7(3+4)	Freedom Fighter			
	FH JF	(4+3)	Pension	12,000		
	PA/C: Cow 2 Goat 4		Cattle Raising	10,000		
	Buffalo 1		Labour	5,000	27,000	N A
	Pension Holder					
	* Case of non- possession of Govt- granted land					
F8	Ramkrishan Sah	8(8+1)	Vegetable			
	Chandrawati	(6+3)	Vending	10,000		
	TGR JF		Tumtum Pulling	5,000		
	OM: Punjab (son)		Remittance	3,000	18,000	N A
	Vegitable Vendor					
	BA: Tumtum					
	* Case of Indebted ness -					
	Rs 5,000 @ 60% pa Interest					
F9	Suresh Chaudhary	9(6+3)	Bidi Making	9,000		
	Anamika	(6+3)	Cultural			
	DGR NF		Performance	1,200	10,200	N A
	* Professional					
	Singer Family					
	Father in-law (Wr)					
F10	Triveni Mandal	4(2+2)	Bidi Making	6,000		
	Kusuma Devi	(1+3)	Labour	2,500	8,500	N A
	DGR NF					

F11	T.N. Mandal	8(8+0)	Bettle Shop	10,000		
	Manita Devi	(2+6)	Timber Business	7,000		
	DGR JF ED		Remittance	3,000	20,000	N A
	BA: Bettle Shop, business					
	<b>OM:</b> Bombay (son)					

## APPENDIX SEVEN (B) - BANANA CROPPING CYCLE (BCC) : THE MASCULINE FARMING

All Estimates For 1 Bigha Containing 1,000 - 1,150 Plants

Period of production: 12-13 Months

Stages Of Production (month-wise)	Processes Of Production	Gender of Labour with Labour days (phase & work - frequency wise )	Rental Cost (in Rs)	Labour Cost (in Rs)	Total Cost (in Rs)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<b>Stage I Month (1)</b>	<b>LAND PREPARATION</b>	<b>Male (5)</b>			
	Manual (Ploughing)	5 (rounds) x 1 labour = 5	200	125	325
	Tractor	4 (rounds)	440		440
<b>Stage II Month (1)</b>	<b>PLANTATION</b>	<b>Male (28)</b>			
	(i) Preparing deep <sup>1</sup> beds	12 labour		300	300
	(ii) Removal of Seedlings & Transfer of Plant <sup>2</sup>	4 labour		100	100
	(iii) Planting	8 labour		200	200
	(iv) Manuring <sup>3</sup>	4 labour		100	100
<b>Stage III Month (2)</b>	<b>CLEANING/ WEEDING</b>	<b>Male (12)</b>			
	Weekly (After one month of plantation)	4 (rounds) x 3 labour = 12		300	300
<b>Stage IV Month (3)</b>	<b>FERTILIZER USE</b>	<b>Male (4)</b>			
	Chemical Fertilizer <sup>4</sup> @ 100 Gm per plant) is applied	4 labour		100	100
<b>Stage V Month (5)</b>	<b>RING-MAKING AND MANURING</b>	<b>Male (16)</b>			
	(i) Korai & Ring-making <sup>5</sup>	8 labour		200	200
	(ii) Manuring <sup>6</sup>	4 labour		100	100
	(iii) Chemical Fertilizer & Insecticide application <sup>7</sup>	4 labour		100	100
<b>Stage VI Month (5-6)</b>	<b>IRRIGATION* &amp; THIMATE SPRAY</b>	<b>Male (24)</b>			
	(i) Patwan <sup>8</sup> begins at 3 <sup>rd</sup> day of manuring	6 (rounds) x 2 labour = 12	720 120 perday x 6	300 (12x25)	1020
	(ii) Thimate Spray at two Weeks interval (one week During rains)	6 (rounds) x 2 labour = 12		300 (12x25)	300
<b>VII Month (7-8)</b>	<b>CLEANING, THIMATE/ FERTILISER-USE</b>	<b>Male (32)</b>			
	(i) Korai & Cleaning	8 labour		200	200
	(ii) Chemical Fertilizer @ 500 gm per plant	4 labour		100	100
	(iii) Thimate Spray	4 (rounds) x 2 labour = 8		200	200
	(iv) Patwan	6 (rounds) x 2 labour = 12	720 120 per day x 6	300	1020

VIII Month (9)	CHOISING OF THE BABY PLANT	Male (36)			
	(i) Baby plant <sup>9</sup> (50 % of the total) is chosen and Wrapped for next year	8 labour		200	200
Month (9-12)	(ii) Premature fruits appear and now onwards weekly rounds of Thimate spray is required	12 (rounds) x 2 labour = 24		600	600
	(iii) Chemical Fertiliser @ 500 gm each plant applied	4 labour		100	100
IX Month(12-13)	RIPENING & CUTTING OF THE FRUITS	Male (25) Female(12)			
	(i) Fruit Chosen for Cutting	13 labour		325	325
	(ii) Dumping <sup>10</sup> of wastage	12 labour		300	300
	(iii) Loading	12 (female labour)		216 (12x 18)	216
Totals		Labour Days: 193 M: 181; F: 12	Rental Cost: Rs. 2,080	Labour Cost Rs. 4,766	Total Cost: Rs. 6,846

Notes:

1. Deep beds of 1ft diameter and 1.5ft depth are prepared at 5-6 ft gap to allow the plant to grow properly. The normal gap is 6ft because 5ft gap is congested for proper growth of the plant. Yet small farmers try 5ft gap. These factors lead to quantitative and qualitaive variations in output.
2. Seedlings are usually transferred from one field to the other. This is required only during the first year of planting. Banana plants give fruits for altogether 4 consecutive years. The next year production process is almost same yet easier and less cost-bearing than the first year.
3. Green Manure (compost) is normally used just after the Planting. It has been observed that some plants died if compost was used before planting, therefore after-manuring is preferred.
4. The name reported by the villagers was Single Super Phosphate (SSP).
5. A ring of about 1 ft radius is made of the soil after Korai, around the root of the each plant.
6. 10 kg of Compost is applied to each Plant. I donot have actual cost estimates for fertilizers, irrigation etc.. All cost-estimates are tentative.
7. Chemical fertilizer (250gm) and Thaimite (a kind of insecticide) in 4 gm quantity are mixed together and applied to each plant. Manure and fertilizer mix is covered with the soil.
8. Patwan (Irrigation) is required at an interval of 7-10 days during Summer, 15 days during Winter. It takes about 10 hours to irrigate 1 Bigha plot. Patwan cost is Rs. 12 for one hour.
9. Plants within a plant with sharp leaves are chosen, wrapped and left as baby plant or second plant for the next year plantation.
10. Dumping is a natural manuring process as well. After the fruit is cut, it is wrapped into the flat banana leaves. Fruitless plants are cut into three-four pieces and dumped into the field, preserving just baby plants to be used as seed for the next year.

## APPENDIX EIGHT – FOOD PRODUCTION CYCLE: THE FEMININE FARMING

(Female-Male Work And Wage In Production Processes: Plot Unit : 1 Bigha)

Male / Female Work Regimes	Production Processes	Wage (Cash+Kind) and Rental Cost (in Rs)	Labour Days and Rental time	Total Cost (Cash+Kind) (in Rs)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>MALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage I</b>			
Manual (includes Cattle)	Ploughing	Wage: 25 + b Rent: 40	2	50+2b 80
Tractor		Rent: 220 per day	½ day	110
	<b>Stage II</b>			
Manual	Chauki <sup>1</sup> Making	Wage: 25 + b	16	400+16b
Tractor		Rent: 220 per day	½ day x 6	660
<b>FEMALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage III</b>	(includes Crop & Gender Variations, though mainly a female domain)		
Manual	Sowing	Wage: 8 +1kg Cereal +125gm Lentils	10 (Wheat & Maize) 12 (Paddy)	80-96 + 10-12kgC + 1.25-1.5kgL
	<b>Stage IV</b>			
Manual	Kyari <sup>2</sup> making	Wage: 5+900gmC (for Wheat & Maize)	30	150+27kgC
		12+b (Paddy)	20	240+12b
		20+b (to Men <sup>3</sup> )		
<b>MALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage V</b>			
Manual	Patwan (round 1)	Wage: 20+b	2	40+2b
Mechanical		Rent: 12 per hr.	8-10 hrs.	96-120
<b>FEMALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage VI</b>			
Manual	Nikauni (round 1)	Wage: 5+900gmC (Wheat & Maize)	20	100+18kgC
		12+b (Paddy)	15	180+15b
<b>Repeated Rounds of Stages V and VI</b>		<b>PADDY, WHEAT, MAIZE</b>		
<b>MALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage VII</b>			
Manual	Patwan (round 2)	Wage: 20+b	2	40+2b
Mechanical		Rent: 12 per hr.	8-10 hrs.	96-120
<b>FEMALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage VIII</b>			
Manual	Nikauni (round 2)	12+b (Paddy)	15	180+15b
		Wage: 5+900gmC (Wheat & Maize)	20	100+18kgC
<b>Repeated Rounds of Stages V and VI</b>		<b>WHEAT AND MAIZE</b>		
<b>MALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage IX</b>			
Manual	Patwan (round 3)	Wage: 20+b	2	40+2b
Mechanical		Rent: 12 per hr.	8-10 hrs.	96-120
<b>FEMALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage X</b>			
Manual	Nikauni (round 3)	Wage: 5+900gmC	20	100+18kgC
<b>MALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage XI</b>			
Manual	Patwan (round 4)	Wage: 20+b	2	40+2b
Mechanical		Rent: 12 per hr.	8-10 hrs.	96-120
<b>FEMALE WORK</b>	<b>Stage XII</b>			
Manual	Nikauni (round 4)	Wage: 5+900gmC	20	100+18kgC

Repeated Rounds of Stages V and VI		MAIZE		
MALE WORK	Stage XIII			
Manual	Patwan (round 5)	Wage: 20+b	2	40+2b
Mechanical		Rent: 12 per hr.	8-10 hrs.	96-120
FEMALE WORK	Stage XIV			
Manual	Nikauni (round 5)	Wage: 5+900gmC	20	100+18kgC
MALE WORK	Stage XV			
Manual	Patwan (round 6)	Wage: 20+b	2	40+2b
Mechanical		Rent: 12 per hr.	8-10 hrs.	96-120
FEMALE WORK	Stage XVI			
Manual	Nikauni (round 6)	Wage: 5+900gmC	20	100+18kgC

Abbreviations: C: Cereals; L: Lentils; b: Breakfast.

**Notes:**

1. Chauki making means seed-bed preparation for sowing the crop (see glossary). Second stage requires 8 times manual bedding or six times mechanical bedding.
2. Nikauni and kyari making involves cleaning of small grass and preparation of slim canals along side the seed-beds.
3. Men are occasionally employed for this work.



## ESSENTIAL GLOSSARY

<i>Adivasi</i>	Tribal
<i>Ahar - pynes</i>	Locally constructed small tank and canal network.
<i>Aangan</i>	Courtyard
<i>Atmasamarpan</i>	Surrender
<i>Bania</i>	Money lender
<i>Banihar</i>	Farm servant
<i>Basti</i>	Residential Cluster of houses in a particular locality.
<i>Bataidari</i>	The act of Share-cropping
<i>Bataidar</i>	Share-croppers
<i>Begars</i>	Labour without any payment.
<i>Benamdari</i>	Possessing of land without any name, one of the chicanery methods adopted by zamindars in Bihar (in other parts of India as well) for keeping land above the ceiling fixed by the government.
<i>Bhoodan</i>	Donating of land to poor by the rich, a Gandhian technique of land redistribution launched by Vinoba Bhave.
<i>Bicchua</i>	Left over of the produce usually allowed by the employers to be collected by children of the labourer's family during storage of the harvest.
<i>Bidi</i>	A kind of small cigarette
<i>Bigha</i>	A local unit for land measurement; 1 bigha = 20 kattha
<i>Chatt land</i>	Fertile tracts lying along side the rivers and canals.
<i>Charkha</i>	Spinning Wheel
<i>Chauki</i>	Seed-bedding prepared for sowing the seed.
<i>Chipko</i>	The act of clinging to trees for saving them from destruction.
<i>Dhenki</i>	Local technology for manual processing of grains
<i>Dhusar</i>	Dust
<i>Diara</i>	Fertile delta land.
<i>Diku</i>	Outsiders
<i>Domat soil</i>	A kind of soil with good fertility
<i>Fauzdari</i>	A legal term for the cases involving physical clashes between the parties

<i>Gaimazarua</i>	Ceiling Surplus land acquired by the government for its redistribution among the landless.
<i>Ganja</i>	A kind of locally prepared intoxicant.
<i>Haat</i>	Local market place
<i>Izzat</i>	Dignity
<i>Jethua maize</i>	A local kind of maize, possible to grow in low land with less fertilizers and manures.
<i>Kalazar</i>	Black fever
<i>Kamiyai</i>	One of the popular names for a bonded labour.
<i>Kathkewla</i>	A kind of conditional reverse tenancy
<i>Kela</i>	Banana
<i>Khadi</i>	Hand spun cloth
<i>Kharot</i>	Straw
<i>Khas land</i>	Land meant for personal cultivation.
<i>Kisan</i>	Peasant
<i>Korai</i>	Digging around the plant for making the soil light
<i>Kyari</i>	Slim canals along the seed beds
<i>Lakh</i>	One tenth of one million
<i>Lathi</i>	Solid sticks made of wood used by people, also called Danda
<i>Lichie</i>	A juicy fruit grown in summer
<i>Mandap</i>	Decorated Platform with high Ceilings
<i>Mahajan</i>	Creditor
<i>Mahantha</i>	The religious trustee
<i>Mazdoor</i>	Labour
<i>Mandir</i>	Religious place for worship and community get together for Hindus
<i>Math</i>	Religious place for worship and community get together for Hindus
<i>Malik</i>	Owner of the land
<i>Nikauni</i>	Cleaning of unwanted growth like, grass etc.
<i>Panch</i>	Judge, in traditional system of local governance via village <i>panchayat</i>
<i>Panchayat</i>	The smallest administrative unit of local self-governenec.
<i>Paragana</i>	District
<i>Pattadar</i>	Holder of the tracts.
<i>Patti</i>	Tract

<i>Patua</i>	Jute
<i>Patwan</i>	Watering of plant (irrigation)
<i>Purohit</i>	Priest
<i>Rahad</i>	Cajanus indicus
<i>Raiyats</i>	Cultivators
<i>Ropani</i>	Weeding (sowing the seed)
<i>Sarpanch</i>	A village level officer under <i>panchayati raj</i> institution.
<i>Seer</i>	A local unit of measurement (1 <i>Seer</i> = 933 gram)
<i>Sena</i>	Army, here Used for private armies
<i>Shivir Vivah</i>	Literal meaning is group marriage
<i>Sudbhama</i>	A kind of reverse tenancy. Ekbarasa (Yearly) and
<i>Tinbarasa</i>	Three-yearly contracts under reverse tenancy.
<i>Tambaku</i>	Tobacco
<i>Tel Ghani</i>	Local technology for extracting oil from the oil seeds.
<i>Thika</i>	Contract
<i>Thikadari</i>	Contractual agreement
<i>Tola</i>	Hamlet
<i>Tori</i>	Mustard

## ACRONYMS

AIWPA	All India Progressive Women's Association
BPC	Banana Production Cycle
CG	Composite Group
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI (ML)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
FPC	Food Production Cycle
GAD	Gender And Development
GDL	Gender Division of Labour
HDR	Human Development Report
IDB	International Development Bureaucracy
IHDR	India Human Development Report
HYV	High Yielding Variety
IRP	Income and Resource Profile
KSS	Krantikari Sanskritik Sangha
KKS	Kishore Krantikari Sangha
MCC	Maoist Coordination Centre
MFW	Minimum Fixed Wage
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NMS	Nari Mukti Sangha
NMSS	Nari Mukti Sangharsh Samiti
NPPW	National Plan Perspective for Women
PG	Pure Group
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SOW	Subordination of Women
STW	Swallow Tubewell
WDB	Women Development Bureaucracy
WID	Women In Development
WWV	Women's World View

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